The SONG of the CARAVAN

RAMA VARMA RESEARCH INSTITUTE.
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by MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

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By

MIRZA AHMAD SOHRAB

Author of "Heart Phantasies," "The New Humanity" and "Abdul Baha in Egypt"

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THE SONG OF THE CARAVAN

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To

JULIE CHANLER

"What the tender and poetic youth dreams to-day, and conjures up with inarticulate speech, is tomorrow the vociferated result of public opinion, and the day after the character of nations."

Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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CHARACTERS
IN
THE SONG OF THE CARAVAN

In Order of Appearance

Names	Roles	Homes of Origin
1. The Vagabond	Narrator of Story	Earth
2. Tamasha	Vagabond's Guide	Earth
3. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher	Lord of Wisdom	Supreme Star
4. Del Aram (Woman)	Freedom's Champion	Venus
5. Jameh-zar	Philosopher	Cygnus
6. Nasseem	Messenger of the Sky	Supreme Star
7. Sar-sar	The Apostle of the Worlds' Holy Spirit	Mars
8. Doust Parast	Peace Advocate	Alpha Centauri
9. Hakim Hakimian	Geographer of Stars	Saturn
10. Azad-pa (Woman)	Dancer	Aldebaran
11. Atash-bar	Poet	Jupiter
12. Shahnaz-nour (Woman)	Singer	Sirius
13. Ahang-zan	Conductor and Composer	Mercury
14. Bazi-del	Dramatist and actor	Altair
15. Jahan-nama	Painter	Uranus
16. Tasveer-kash	Sculptor	Neptune
17. Pasand-bana	Architect	Betelgeuse
18. Rouh-afza	Aesthete	Antares
19. Sehhat-deh	Physician	Arcturus
20. Zour-afshan	Athlete	Canopus

Names	Roles	Homes of Origin
21. Darbar-adli	Statesman	Arcturus
22. Elm-parvaz	Psychologist	Capella
23. Faravan-taher	President of the Republic	Supreme Star
24. Afshar-shad	Wife of the President	Supreme Star
25. Gor-Gor	Vice-President of the Universal University	Supreme Star
26. Zolmani	The Satan of the Heavens	Supreme Star
27. Doshman-shab	The Satan of the Earth	Earth

Each of the following Spiritual Beings delivers a Divine Sermon before the students of the stars in the Universal University

Brahma	Lao-tzu
Buddah	Moses
Zoroaster	Christ
Confucius	Mohammad

THE WAKEFULNESS OF SLEEP

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Chapter I

THE WAKEFULNESS OF SLEEP

THE old Song of the Caravan, written by Hafiz, the lyric poet of my country, and sung by Tamasha, the Persian camel-driver and minstrel, came to an abrupt end. Its last sad note upborne on the winds, died in the far distant horizon.

The story-teller had finished his tale; the leader of our cavalcade had laid aside his flute; the camp-fire was casting its amber glow on the faces of the weary travelers, and the Valley of Baharistan was swallowed in the dusky darkness of a silent night.

The haunting beauty of the Persian melody chanted by Tamasha had sunk deep into my heart; the day's march had been long, hot and dusty, and soon I was enveloped in the magic arms of sleep.

Strange to say, in sleep I found myself fully awake—in fact I was more awake than during the hours of wakefulness. My physical and spiritual senses had loosed the fetters of earthly limitations. My eyes, undimmed, clear, bright, could see the distances of millions of miles. My ears could catch the strains of the invisible Angels streaming down through the cloud-lands of the vasty deep. My mind could grasp the mysterious course of Divine Providence, and my spirit, riding on the chariot of inspira-

tion, could soar toward the unknown and undiscovered boundaries of the illumined Universe.

Yes, I *was awake,* in my sleep, nay rather it seemed to me that my hours of wakefulness, compared with this new thrilling existence, had been hours of *sleep*. For, in this unconquered and unconquerable world, I was a free agent. My dormant faculties awakened, my untouched feelings aroused, my dark energies rushing into light, I felt that I had become a new being, endowed with unimagined potency. I realized that the hidden things were about to be revealed, the revealed things to be understood, and the understood things practiced.

In this enchanting world of sleep—may I not call it wakefulness?—I found Tamasha, the minstrel and camel-driver, the guide of the Caravan. He was the same Tamasha—youthful, radiantly youthful, carefree, knowing the trails and the dangers of the desert, a dreamer of dreams and a way-shower. With his Persian flute in his hand, he was the same shepherd boy who had herded the flocks of my father on the pasture-land of Sideh, outskirting Esphahan, the city of mosques and minarets, where I was born on a farm.

In that romantic and pastoral atmosphere of the East, Tamasha and I had rested many a night under the starry sky, he relating weird and wondrous stories of men and genii, Peris and Divs, and I listening with rapt attention, while my eyes watched the steady march of the heavenly constellations.

But now I was awake in the dream-world, and the dream-world had assumed the sense of the real world, and Ta-

masha was asking, as he always used to ask when we had exhausted all other subjects:

"Vagabond of Eternity! Whither bound?"

"Whither bound yourself?"

"Toward yonder starry lights!"

"Do you desire a companion?"

"If his heart be strong and his will undismayed."

"I can but follow you and obey your orders," I answered, half jokingly, half seriously.

"You say well! For this is not an ordinary journey," he remarked, not countenancing my playful mood.

"I know, Tamasha." I arose to meet the situation, becoming entirely serious. "You are the companion of my childhood, and I have always trusted in your guidance. Do you remember?"

"Ah, my beloved Vagabond! What years we have spent together, freighted with joys!"

"And much pain," I added.

"Yes, much pain," mused Tamasha. "Your mother died when you were still a suckling babe and left you in the care of my mother."

"We two have grown together, through the joys and pains!" I said, hugging my friend to my breast.

"Through the joys and pains!" echoed back Tamasha. "I love them all, for the Law of Opposites must fulfill its mission in our lives."

"In order that we may taste the fruit of self-realization," I rejoined. "I know, I know your pet theory—heat and cold; light and shadow; life and death; progress and decline; happiness and sorrow; action and reaction; in other

words, the oldest principle of our Master Zarathustra's Duality—Ahura Mazda and Angra-Manyu."

"Come, brother Vagabond, please, no philosophizing at this hour!" Tamasha stopped me. "Up, O dreamer and away! 'Tis time to leave for—"

"Yonder starry lights!"

"Exactly."

"How?"

"With wings."

"With wings?"

"Assuredly! With light, etheric wings that will carry us through all the immensities of the limitless Space."

"And we will visit those far revolving globes?"

"And meet and associate with their inhabitants."

"And converse with them?"

"Yes. And learn new principles and new ideals."

"What joy! We will bring them back to our sorely-tried fellowmen."

"No!" Tamasha stamped his foot. "Your sorely-tried fellowmen are incapable of understanding those principles and ideals. They are deaf, dumb and blind."

"O Tamasha!" I cried, "I do not think so. Mankind is willing to learn. I know it. I know it by experience."

"What experience? Do I not see that man is becoming, day by day, more and more heedless?"

"On the contrary! Day by day, more and more, man is becoming heedful."

"Heedful of what?" asked Tamasha sharply.

"Heedful of God; heedful of Truth; heedful of Justice; heedful of Liberty; heedful of Love. My only reason in following you on this aerial journey is to learn new laws, and to bring those laws back to this distracted earth, so that

I may teach the children of men the ways of the heavenly civilization and lay the foundation of the Palace of the New Humanity."

"Vain hope! You will never succeed. Your path will be strewn with rocks and brambles. You will be called a heretic, an innovator, an impostor. Men will hate you and shamefully persecute you, and they will cause you to drink the cup of hemlock, or suffer you to die on the cross."

"Nevertheless, I shall try," I answered firmly.

"And if you fail?"

"I shall try again."

"And if . . . ."

"I shall try again and again and again." I intoned my words with a depth of enthusiasm and a fiery conviction, my inner being illumined with the light of a holy and divine dedication. Tamasha looked at me in wonder which was mixed with a mischievous delight, for in his roguish way, he had often goaded me to rise to the sacrificing life of a crusader, an initiate, a poet, an artist, one whose heart is wrapt all round with mystery—unearthly, celestial, transcendent.

For a moment both of us were silent, thinking of the impending journey and hardly daring to voice our hopes and fears. At last I brought myself back to the actuality of the forthcoming voyage and broke the lengthening silence:

"Wings! Wings! Where are your promised wings?"

"Come, Vagabond of Eternity," calmly rejoined Tamasha. "We have to shed these earthly robes and bathe our bodies in yon silver lake, whose waters give life to the green hills and the smiling valleys."

So, without further discussion, we threw aside our many colored garments and entered the crystalline lake. For a time we sported hither and thither diving into its cool depths and rising to its bejeweled surface. All the while I felt a growing sense of lightness and etheriality. It seemed to me that I was being baptized in the pool of immortality; that I was casting away my physical body and gathering unto myself a spiritual form—dreamlike, weightless, imponderable. I realized within myself the keenest pangs of pleasure and I swam as never before, with flying body and darting limbs.

At last we emerged from the lake, I feeling the intoxication of a new gladness, of a new revelation. I wished to shout, to dance, to cry, to pulsate like blood in the arteries of the world and running to Tamasha, who was watching me indulgently, I grasped his hands and fairly shouted:

"I am happy! I am happy! I am light! O Tamasha! O Tamasha! Touch me! Touch me! I am not heavy! *I can fly!*"

"Yes, you can fly," Tamasha answered in an unemotional tone.

"But as yet I have no wings."

"You *have* wings! The most irridescent wings, the most untiring pair of wings that the world has ever seen!"

"But I do not *see* them!"

"Do you not *feel* them?"

"O yes! O yes! Tamasha! My own Tamasha! I feel them! I feel them all through my body! I feel as though I were nothing but a pair of golden wings, wide-stretched, ready to soar through the infinite blue."

"And you *will* soar through the infinite blue!"

"And *we* will soar through the infinite blue!" I cried

ecstatically, wildly, exultantly. I fell back exhausted. Then, as though caught by the whirlpool of a prophetic gale I arose, facing the four winds of the shimmering sky and flinging my words towards the East and toward the West, toward the North and toward the South:

"Yes! Yes! *I* will soar through the infinite blue, for I am old as the radiant gods! I am born of the Essence of essences! I sit on the throne of Immortality! I am the mirror of the Universe! Yes! Yes! I will bring to the ears of fever-stricken humanity new songs from the Paradise of Beauty! I will sprinkle the parched lips with the blood of a New Truth! I will bring to the world the fruit of a new autumn; the dynamo of a new Message; the symphony of a new Art, and the trumpet of a new Freedom!"

Tamasha waited mute and wonder-struck before this outburst of mystical rhapsody and then, taking my now almost disembodied arm, he pointed with his fingers:

"To yon shoreless space!"

"Toward yonder starry lights!" I answered back and like two mysterious figures bent on a strange and unheard-of adventure, we floated off from the face of the earth.

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IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE INFINITE

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Chapter II

IN THE VESTIBULE OF THE INFINITE

AS we continued to fly through illimitable space, we realized that the Universe was astir with life. Released from the evanescent speck of dust—the Earth, the luminous tracts on high were our exalted range. Here we were gazing around the vault of the Heavens. Here, from that full complex of never-ending wonders, we were to conceive of the Author of them all. We were traveling faster than the course of light.

The pageant and the romance of the Stars awed me. I felt encompassed by splashes of radiant energy. The star-life and my life were one. I realized that I was part of this deep pulsation of the worlds' planetary music, measuring out the steps of time; part of this one great universal life; part of this starry outlook, with its undiminished brilliance. I understood that God is not to be *feared* but to be *approached;* not shunned in craven terror, but sought after with the keen delight of celestial explorers.

With these thoughts in my mind, I turned to my companion, and with a feeling of exaltation, asked him:

"Tamasha! Where are we? Where is our home, the Earth?"

"The Earth! There is no *Earth!* Look! There is a *Star* shining in the depths of space!"

"O! How beautiful! Our globe has become a Star!"

I exclaimed with wonder.

"It has always been a Star, yet men look upon it as a plot of earth and fight with one another for the possession of it."

I did not answer him, but kept on my flight. O what ecstatic bliss! What intensity of light! What vividness of color! Still, the fact that I, the infinitely small, was taken up by the infinitely large frightened me, and perplexed by these unhoped-for revelations, I turned again to Tamasha:

"Where is the elusive Mercury?"

"Lost in the immeasurable distance."

"And the glorious Venus?"

"Lovers upon the planet Earth can look upon it."

"And the fiery Mars?"

"The warriors invoke its help, but it is out of our view."

Disturbed by these enigmatic answers, I plied him with more questions:

"And where is the magnificent Jupiter?"

"There! It marches majestically across the expanse of the skies."

"Show me, please, the ring-girdled Saturn!"

"See! It shines with a dull, leaden light."

"And what about the giant Uranus and the colossal Neptune?"

"Both are out of the reach of our sight, counting their slow revolutions around their ruler, the Sun."

"What," I cried with amazement, "are we then above and beyond our solar system?"

"Assuredly! We are now soaring through the Milky Way. The Ancients, with a greater understanding, called it the 'Path of the Souls.' Here we are in a universe lit

by hundreds of millions of suns! Look, friend, at the dense crowding of huge Stars known as the Galactic World! Behold the Globular Star Clusters—a brilliant assemblage of billions of suns! We are flying toward a world as yet undetected by mortals."

Yes, it was all true, and in this mysterious, fadeless heaven, I was the child of the skies, a soul clad in air, baptized in the fountain of azure light. When Tamasha announced to me that we were soaring through the Milky Way and heading toward an undiscovered universe, I was at first sorely afraid, but the desire of witnessing the sublime drama of a super-creation, and the hope of rending asunder the veils of everlasting mystery gave me an undreamed-of courage and an unshakable resolution. For I was not satisfied with the portions of the Creator's ways which showed only shadows of His glory, but longed to hear the thunder of His power, and yearned to behold the trembling of Chaos big with the birth of Stars. I wanted to hear the Creator's speech, for I was told that when He spoke millions of worlds leapt into radiant light.

Possessed by these resolutions I continued on with Tamasha ever beside me, and our bodies were pierced with star-shafts as we journeyed through clusters of suns, meteoric showers, comets and nebulae. Beauty dwelt in this universe of starry mists, with its unmeasurable possibilities, and nowhere did we notice frontier or boundary, and none detained us to examine our passports.

It seemed that our immersion in the lake of the Earth's valley had set at naught the material laws of our beings. Our minds were stripped of all their limited ideas and concepts. Our souls were denuded of all their worldly sympathies and aversions. We had become like children,

but children with no inherited characteristics or pre-natal notions. As we pursued our flight, I felt that we belonged to a new order of beings. Some mysterious power had made us like polished tablets, on the surface of which unrealized dreams and unevolved ideas could be engraved. We had become ready and susceptible instruments to be touched by the nimble fingers of the Celestial Artist and thrilled with a ravishing music—a new music, to fill the souls with perfume, a new music, heard as yet only in dreams.

Tamasha preceded me always, and I followed the trail which he ploughed through the star-strewn field of Heaven. Now and then he would look over his shoulder, giving me an encouraging smile and making sure that I had not fallen behind. He piloted me with a reckless pleasure, and moved toward whatever point his desire for aerial adventure prompted him.

One of the puzzling results of this lightning-like voyage was that we had completely forgotten that we were the children of Time and Space. In this super-world in which we were excursioning, there was neither Time nor Space. We were floating in the realm of Everlasting Yea, and soaring through the kingdom of Eternal Now!

Presently I felt a sense of reaction, my one-time consciousness must have invaded me, and turning to Tamasha, I whispered uncertainly:

"Where are we?"

"We are in the Vestibule of the Infinite as we were upon the Earth. We have as yet not advanced a single step!"

"What!" That was all that I could utter, struck dumb with astonishment.

Wishing apparently to torment me, and suffering my

confusion to become more confounded, he looked at me quizzically and with an impish light in his eyes, asked:

"Vagabond of Eternity! What of Time?"

I was exasperated by his nonchalance and made up my mind to nettle him with an equally baffling query:

"Guide of sidereal flight! What of Space?"

For a moment he became silent, and then he thundered back:

"Time and Space are no more!"

Then he said:

"We are living in Super-time and are soaring in the empire of Super-space."

"Which means?"

"Many things."

"One of them?"

"Are you ready to receive it?"

"Yes, Tamasha, I would like to know."

"It means this: We have broken the chains of mortality. We are in the fourth dimensional kingdom. We have slayed the slayer of Self. We are standing calm in the circle of godhead. We are the sportsmen of the sky, the pathfinders of the Stars. Before us the island universes prostrate themselves in the dust."

"Why?" I inquired.

"Because we have quaffed the Elixir of Immortality from the hand of the cup-bearer of Life. We are the worshippers of Truth at the shrine of Beauty."

"Beauty? What is beauty?"

"What! What! You ask me what is beauty, while you are encircled by the hosts of beauty! Look at the Creator's whirling globes! Gaze toward the dancing lights of the

Almighty! See those mad, delirious orbs of the supreme Artist! Here, amid this paradise of imperishable beauty, drink deep from the chalice of wonderment and never question—what is beauty?"

"And what is beauty?"

"You dare to ask again—what is beauty?"

"Yes, Tamasha, you beauty-intoxicated! Tell me your ideals of beauty," I answered.

"Beauty—beauty—how can I describe beauty? May I say—Beauty is the fringe of the garment of the Lord! Beauty is the sensuous image of the infinite! Beauty is simplicity and tranquil repose! Beauty is the fragile, fleeting perfume of the rose! Beauty is the picture of the Omnipresent Deity in creation! Beauty is the deathless oracle of nature! Beauty is the cause and the effect of nature! Beauty is the essence of order and unity! Beauty is God's handwriting on these Stars and on the blades of grass in the gardens of our Earth! Beauty is a ray from the sun of reality that illumines the eyes of reason! Beauty is the invisible clothed in the visible! These words and many others may describe beauty, but men will never know beauty until they *feel* it in their hearts."

"O Tamasha!" I cried with joy. "If we could but wait a second, I would embrace you for these words. They are bright jewels which I will treasure in my casket of memory."

"What for?"

"To adorn the souls of men and to decorate the halls of their minds."

"Men are ashamed to acknowledge that they possess souls, and as for the decoration of their minds, they prefer cheap tinsels and gaudy croqueries."

"I know men," I answered vehemently, "who have seen the vision of their creative spirits and whose minds are storehouses of solar energies."

"Those men are heavenly visitors upon the Earth," Tamasha told me.

"And where is their celestial abode?" I inquired eagerly.

"Beyond the boundaries of the universe through which we are traveling."

"And where are we passing now?" I asked.

"We are skirting the Spiral Nebula."

"And is there life beyond those worlds?"

"Simpleton!" he smiled back at me. "Real Life does not appear until we cross the threshold of the Outer Nebula."

"Beyond the galaxies of the Pleiades, Orion, Andromeda and Sirius?"

"Yes, Vagabond," Tamasha answered calmly. "Steady your nerves. Listen! On the other side of Aldebaran, Antares, Betelgeuse, Vega, Canopus and Omega Centauri."

"Great God!" I exclaimed, my mind reeling with the very thought of it.

"Wait! What you have heard and seen are comparatively of little importance. We are heading for the Undiscovered Country, the Lost Paradise, the Home of Eternal Rhythm, in the Super-Universe of creation, the Star of Love!"

"And will we tarry there a while?"

"Yes."

"Will I be permitted to meet its spiritual inhabitants?"

"Yes."

"And ask them questions?"

"Yes."

"And learn the Gospel of a New Kingdom?"

"Provided you have forgotten the Gospel of the Old Kingdom."

"I have already left it far behind."

"You must become like unto a babe."

"And be born again? Is that possible?"

"All things are possible to the eager seekers after Truth."

"I am willing to try."

"Fear not, Vagabond. It is the Father's pleasure to give you a New Kingdom, but His Kingdom is not of the Earth, His Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom. It is the glorious majesty of a new life."

"A new life?" I shouted with delight.

"A new life," Tamasha answered without comment.

I did not ask any more questions, but like an enamoured and captivated lover, I plunged with added zest through the starry depths, rapturously crying aloud:

"A new life! A new life! A new life!"

THE PLANET OF LOVE

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കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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Chapter III

THE PLANET OF LOVE

"TAMASHA, where are we? Tamasha, where are we?" I cried in rapture, as I gazed on the infinite panorama of light and color spread before me.

"We are in the grasp of the Creator!"

"If this is the grasp of the Creator, then let me dwell in it forever."

"You shall dwell in it, but not forever. Here is the school wherein you will learn mighty lessons."

"From whom?"

"From the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher."

"From the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher? And is this His delectable abode?" I asked, beside myself with joy.

"Yes," Tamasha answered, "this is His abode! In every Universal Cycle He selects one of the Stars as the seat of Spiritual Democracy. For the present, this is His headquarters. Here He has established His Universal University. Here He is training planetary and cosmic souls to be sent as His representatives and ambassadors to far-flung Stars and distant planets."

"In that case what am I to do here?" I inquired in a hushed voice, half glimpsing the object of my sidereal flight.

Solemnly he answered me:

"He knows! He knows! He knows it all." And then, as though he could no longer contain himself: "O my beloved Vagabond! You have at last reached the desire of your heart. Here, in the Universal University, under the guidance of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, you shall learn burning words with which you will compose a new song; you shall be encircled with the revelations of a new beauty with which you will glorify the children of men."

"And is this the Spiritual Empire of Democracy founded by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher?" I asked, in a bewilderment of delight.

"Of course! Don't you see? Don't you realize? We are at the threshold of the Supreme Star, the Planet of Love."

"The Supreme Star! The Planet of Love!" I echoed back the voice of my faithful guide. A flood of tears filled my eyes and my soul was on the verge of breaking in twain.

Ere long I became conscious of the presence of other beings, flying with utmost speed in the same direction as we. From the moment that Tamasha and I had left the Earth, we had been alone, but here—who were these winging spirits—just like ourselves—two by two—radiant, thoughtful, a mighty host? Who were they?

I put the question to Tamasha.

"They are," he said, "graduated souls from other planets, other globes, and they are being led by their guides to the Supreme Star, where they will be enrolled as Students in the Universal University of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher."

"O! O! Then, I am not the only one?"

Tamasha smiled at my naive question.

"No. You shall have innumerable schoolmates."

"I see," looking at the hosts of the flying souls thronging the very entrance of the Supreme Star.

"Think what a vast congregation of scholars! Students from all the stellar systems in this infinite creation! Stupendous, is it not? And this gathering together happens but once in myriads of ages! Think what you can learn from these souls, for it takes time, aeons and aeons of time, to develop a cosmic being so that he may become eligible to pass through the portals of the Universal University, to be taught under the guidance of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher."

"O Tamasha! Please forgive me and forget my foolishness."

"Surely I forgive you. You must be very happy. Keep your soul in peace."

We had now reached the shining outskirts of the Supreme Star, and were caught in a dense crowding of the new Students and their guides. A soft, unfamiliar brightness, pale blue and gold, streamed forth from the regions toward which we were led, and as we entered the atmosphere of the Supreme Star, music of ravishing loveliness filled my ears. It seemed to come from a distant divine orchestra, and as I listened entranced, I felt that I could understand its main theme, and the harmonies of my inner consciousness leapt forth in answer to the call of these golden melodies portraying God's rapturous love of the worlds and showing forth His Glory.

The orchestra played on every chord in my heart till I was beside myself with emotion; now appalled with awe at

the grandeur of the creation upon the threshold of which I was standing; now melted to tears of regret for those left behind upon the Earth who would never be swept by this flood of sublime rapture, and again stirred to dance and sing, to leap and shout for joy, borne upward to the very pinnacle of delight.

The music passed through and through me, swaying me with every emotion. My heart became an over-brimming sea of tenderest feeling. I could now send my dearest love to every living thing; whether it were flower, bird or animal, man or angel—in each I could see, and see plainly, the gleaming light of the Worlds' Holy Spirit, and towards each I felt a compassion which made me long to gather it to me in fondest embrace. And so, as wave upon wave of transcending song continued to beat upon me, love flooded my soul completely, and caught up in a delirium of exaltation, I passed upon the Supreme Star—the Planet of Love.

I felt that I could have listened to this unseen orchestra forever, but suddenly I found myself in a Garden. From all parts of this paradise, luminous spirits came forward among the flowers which opened and dilated, welcoming the newcomers, and at the head of the innumerable assemblage walked a Holy Being, whose countenance radiated love, compassion and joy. It was not hard to guess who this magnetic personality was! Oh, heaven! Here was the culmination of my long years of agitated hopes and frustrated yearnings. Here was I, standing face to face with the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher! Here I could have wished to lie down and die in peace. But in the presence of this incarnation of light and beauty there was no death—only life, new life, better life, sweeter life, more abundant life.

It seemed that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher knew the guides. They were His emissaries, His messengers, who had directed the wings of the ripened souls of the planets and stars to His School, and he welcomed them with joyous affability, conveying to them that He was well pleased with their work, faithfully performed. Then, before I realized it, Tamasha and the others had disappeared, and during my whole stay on the Supreme Star I did not see him nor, strange to say, did I ever miss him once. He had piloted me through the Universe and had brought me to my destination, receiving words of commendation from his Master: Well done, thou good and faithful servant—and is not this the highest reward?

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher looked into the eager faces of His new scholars. In His countenance I saw complete love, understanding, sympathy, peace and a wisdom all-embracing. I was but one among thousands, yet I felt that He knew me, that He loved me, and that He cherished me in a particular and individual way. Was I not His one favorite, chosen from among millions on the planet Earth?

Led by Him, and surrounded by His new Students from every part of the Universe, we walked toward the center of the Paradise of Flowers. Here, by His command, hundreds of graceful cup-bearers appeared upon the scene and gave us to drink of the Nectar of Immortality, and no sooner had we quaffed the sparkling draught, than we experienced within ourselves new eyes, new ears and new tongues, by means of which we were enabled to see new heavenly visions, to listen to new spiritual melodies and to speak with each other in the new language of the Supreme Star—the Planet of Love. Then, under the shade of the

heavenly trees in the silent atmosphere of eternity, perfumed with the fragrance of the rose-garden of God, He gave us our first lesson in a language which we all could understand, and of His inspiring utterances I remember these sentences:

"Children of immortal bliss! You belong to the armies of the Future.

"You are the soldiers of the hosts of Life.

"Life is the intention of creation!

"What kind of Life?

"Spiritual Life!

"Celestial Life!

"Universal Life!

"Here you shall live only by the spirit and for the spirit, for to the souls who think and dream and act, the gift of Spiritual Life belongs.

"You are the guardians of the inheritance of the humanities of the Stars!

"Your celestial brotherhood and sisterhood have prefigured your epochal journey to the Supreme Star.

"Your planets, your globes are not isolated and lost in the Universe. They do not live by themselves, but are linked and held together by the law of universal affinity and co-operation.

"Here, in this heavenly University, the panorama of infinite Life, connected Life, interdependent Life, harmonious Life, will be unfolded step by step before your receptive minds.

"Whether you dwell on Orion or on the Pleiades, on Mars or on the Earth; whether you come from Sirius or from Pegasus, from Aldebaran or from Andromeda, you

are not the citizens of one country nor of one world, but are in very truth:

"The citizens of the Universe!

"The dwellers of the Heavens!

"The denizens of the Stars!

"Your worlds, your planets, your globes are none other than cities in the Celestial Country, and you are the inhabitants of this Celestial Country, bound together by the unbreakable ties of primordial memory.

"In my Father's House there are many mansions and you, each one of you, comes from one of those Mansions of the Sky."

Thus spoke our Celestial Teacher, and by the witchery of His eloquent explanations, He lifted our souls to the Eternal Heights.

I listened to His words entranced, my heart filled with an ever-growing enthusiasm, an ever-increasing fire.

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THE FIAT OF PROVIDENCE

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Chapter IV

THE FIAT OF PROVIDENCE

ON the Planet of Love I was never alone. I was living in the omnipresent household of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. By day and by night, He stood by my side and I stood by His side. I associated with Him on terms of divinest intimacy, while slowly He taught me the mysteries of cosmic life and cosmic truth. Often I followed in His footsteps, and as He spoke, I stored in my mind the jewels of His teachings, and there was a time when He lifted me up with Himself on the Mount of Transfiguration, and revealed to me the glories of His Kingdom of Spiritual Democracy, the majesty of His Dominion of Celestial Brotherhood, and the prowess of His Army of Light.

One day I asked Him, I asked the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, if the Planet of Love, on which He was temporarily residing, was the very last Star on the outskirts of the Universe; if this present kingdom of His was situated on the shore of a veritable desert of non-being—on the outermost verge of Creation. He did not answer me in words, but conducted me to the top of a glittering Mountain of Light.

"Vagabond of Eternity, behold!" And with His fingers He pointed to the zenith.

Wonder of wonders! Could I believe my eyes? Another stellar universe was descending upon me—millions and millions of suns grouped together in the spaceless space! I sought with my new-found vision to fathom the depths of the immensity around me, and everywhere, upon all sides, I perceived similar galaxies of lights, similar constellations of revolving orbs. An overwhelming emotion took possession of my mind, and it seemed that eternity would not be long enough to enable me to enjoy all those spectacles of creation. Yet I felt and considered that it was my inalienable birthright to continue adventuring through those island-universes. I wished to go on and on, exploring, prospecting, discovering, investigating, conquering new worlds, wresting from the hand of Fate the sceptre of knowledge, plumbing the deeps of the Unknown and the Unknowable, and planting my flag on the godlike poles of the Unattained and the Unattainable. And because my desire seemed impossible, I cried in utter despair:

"Never shall I reach the end? Never? Never?"

And the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher answered me:

"My Vagabond of Eternity! You have reached the end. Here you are in my Presence. He who has seen me has seen all the worlds of God. The inhabitants of those higher planets which you have just beheld are awaiting my manifestation in their midst and are daily praying for my appearance. In whatever world I establish my reign, there is the End and the Beginning, the Alpha and the Omega."

"Oh," I cried, as though re-awakened out of a deep slumber, "then you are the Spiritual Ruler of those worlds?" pointing to the blue roof of Heaven.

"And the ruler of those worlds." And He designated

the stellar course of the Milky Way and the solar system through which I had already journeyed.

In utter humility I knelt before Him.

The assemblage of the Students from the other planets had special periods of association with the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. He would take each soul to the Paradise of Flowers, and there talk with him alone. I could never conceive of the nature of these conversations, for the needs and requirements of every globe being to a very large extent quite different, each one had to receive an allowance of private instruction and coaching which would have been unintelligible to the others.

A few days after our arrival, we were bidden to meet Him on the slope of a lofty mountain. It was such a marvelous experience that I can never forget it. We were grouped about upon the grass, awaiting His appearance, when suddenly, like a pillar of light, He was seen standing erect and majestic before us. How I loved Him at that moment! He rose above us as the Himalaya towers above petty, insignificant hills. For an instant He stood, silent, prayerful, chiseled against the clear sky, the embodiment of power and beauty. Then His lips moved. I remember some of His holy words:

"My Students of Eternity! My future ambassadors to sidereal and solar worlds!

"Gird ye up the loins of endeavor!

"Let the seas of your souls reflect the stars of my cosmic truths.

"Keep your eyes open, your ears unlocked and your minds receptive, so that the rays of my Sun of Reality may enlighten you.

"Associate with one another with joy and fragrance, and clothe the bodies of your ideas with the eternity of my creation.

"Rest assured! You are my possessions, and my possessions shall never be destroyed.

"Have no fear! You are my lights, and my lights shall never become extinct.

"On the tablets of your spirits I shall engrave my immortal precepts—precepts that will endure forever.

"I shall suffer you to become my exhaustless treasuries, for in you I shall hide the pearls of my mysteries and the gems of my knowledge, that you may bestow endless wealth upon the denizens of your worlds.

"On this day, I have opened before your faces the doors of the Placeless. Appreciate the value of such an opportunity and do not let this radiant jewel slip from your fingers.

"Here live ye the life of the Flowers of my Paradise—opening your hearts to the light of the sky, to the sun and to the sweet-smelling breezes."

And so we continued to live in the Paradise of Flowers, tended by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. We sat around His table and partook of the food of love and amity. He allayed our thirst with the water of His utterances. All our wants and desires were anticipated and fulfilled. Many of the Students had strange experiences with Him, proving the fact that He knew the events of their lives and could read their thoughts, without so much as a whisper on their part. He answered many of their questions without those questions being asked.

This was illustrated to me in a way which convinced me

beyond doubt that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was all-knowledge and all-wisdom. I was walking behind Him at an early hour, thinking of a dream that my grandmother had in Esphahan, many years before I saw the light of day. In this dream, she had seen a glorious Being descended from the Stars and standing betwixt the Heavens and the Earth. He seemed to her like an immortal rose, breathing fragrance throughout the Universe; like a light, filling the far, untraveled profundities of space with glad, chanting rays. She lifted up her face to this Soul of all the worlds and saw that His countenance was wreathed in smiles. Soon He descended from His canopied throne and approached her with measured steps. Wave upon wave of boundless gratitude throbbed in her heart, swelling to a raptured song. Now the mighty Being stood before her, filling her room with light, and then He spoke to her these words of boundless love and peerless promise:

"Glad tidings, O Mother of Purity! I bring thee good and glorious news. Guard and cherish thy daughter, Zahra, for she is destined to become the mother of a son who will be a standard-bearer of freedom, a guide to the weary travelers in the sahara of faithlessness and a world-shaking voice singing the songs of my truth, my love and my beauty!

"Be of good cheer, O Mother of Purity, and never falter in the path of the New Revelation! When the time comes, I shall send for thy grandson and shall teach him myself. I will instil in his blood the dreams and aspirations of a New Humanity; I will knead his substance with the essence of my love; I will knight him in the hall of the Stars, and will send him as my ambassador to all the races and nations of the Earth. Be of good cheer, and again I say

unto thee, be of good cheer, and whenever thou art in trouble, call upon my Nameless Name and I shall come to thine assistance."

My grandmother knelt at His blessed feet, weeping glad tears of joy, and then He took her up into His arms, and kissed her brow.

Years later, when I was still a child—my mother having passed into the life beyond, the grandmother one night related her dream to me in a hushed voice. It was the first time that she had told it to anyone, and I did not know what it could mean. I remember so well, her eyes were filled with tears and she held me in her arms, crooning words of endearment until I fell asleep.

As I walked upon the Supreme Star following the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, I was thinking of this dream and of the strange events of my childhood, when suddenly He turned to me with a smile, saying:

"My Vagabond of Eternity! Your grandmother—ah yes! I called her Mother of Purity."

"Then it was you—you—who came to her in a dream?" I faltered.

"Yes," He answered. "Long before my present Students were born, I visited all the planets and Stars in the sidereal constellations and throughout the solar systems, selecting from among their humanities those families which were worthy of such a divine responsibility."

"And was mine one of them?" I inquired, my face in the dust.

"Yes," He replied. "The individual history of every family in the stellar and solar worlds is ever present in my

mind. From my vantage-ground in the skies, I supervise not only the march of the spinning globes, but watch the progress of the people everywhere. Whenever an act of kindness is performed, I keep a record of it in my heart, and nature causes its effect to flow in the blood of the actor. As persons increase the quality and quantity of their unselfish works, Nature also does its part in registering their collective effect in the blood. In the course of time, the blood becomes purer, stronger, more vibrant—dancing globes of energizing, life-imparting electrons. This capital of selfless deeds hidden in the bloom-stream is transmitted from generation to generation of selected families. Here then we have a slow, steady, yet sure accumulation of universal, selfless, humanitarian blood-particles, which finally aggregate into a stream fully capable of combating the sins of a world. Many such families were living on the different planets. The hour had struck and, according to the Fiat of Providence, I visited those families and selected my scholars."

"And was mine one of them?" I asked again, lost in utter humility at the transcending grace of an all-merciful God.

"Yes."

"And what is the reason for all these things?"

By this time many of the Students had drawn near and were listening to the explanations of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. And when I asked the object of the long process of life, they waited for the answer as if their very lives hung in the balance.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher looked compassionately into the faces of His elected and chosen disciples and said:

"Love. I wanted to be known, therefore I created you to know me. I loved Life and Motion, and realized that

Life and Motion could not be perpetuated without Love. Therefore Love is the object of creation. Love is perpetual Life and perpetual Motion—the complete vitality.

"Love is the cause of the existence of all phenomena.

"Love is the conscious bestowal of beauty.

"Love is the light that scatters the hosts of darkness.

"Love is the spirit of life, animating and sustaining the bodies of the Stars.

"Love is the supreme law in the vast Universe of God.

"Love is the one principle that produces harmony and co-operation among the atoms of existence.

"Love is the universal magnetic power between the planets which shine in the depths of infinite space.

"I loved your creation. Therefore I created you.

"When you return to your homes throughout the horizons of the firmament, I beg you to teach *this* Love to your fellow beings. In order to uplift and help them, you must love them. Meet hatred with love. Welcome resistance with non-resistance. Cope with suspicion through the power of confidence.

"The Universe is one home and all living creatures are the children of one Father.

"Show your peoples that they should not depend solely upon the teachings of their past leaders and Prophets—no matter how great they were. Let them look into the mirrors of the Future—the mirrors of their own hearts, and find therein the precepts of an all-inclusive, all-pervading society of universal Love and celestial brotherhood.

"Direct the steps of your fellowmen, not to the cradles of childish fancies, not to the tombs of primitive superstitions, not even to yourselves—wise and knowing as you

may be—but to the unquenchable fire which steadily burns upon the altars of their own souls.

"Help them, my Students of Eternity, in the establishment of a creedless, divine congregation, the members of which will be related by invisible and spiritual ties that *connect* but do not *bind*.

"Inspire my Children of the Stars with the thought that they should build, not temples of stones and bricks, but temples whose domes are the boundless skies, whose walls are the four points of the limitless horizon. The doors of these temples shall be open to all mankind; their decorations shall be the ideals of truth and liberty; their lights the stars of the kingdom of Love; their altars the expanse of nature, and their worshippers the pure-hearted and the sin-stained creatures of the worlds.

"Tell your fellowmen to build *such* temples!

"And in these temples not built by hands—

"Teach the children of the New Humanity to sing ever newer and more sublime songs.

"Teach them to become their own masters.

"Teach them to stand on their own feet and face the sun.

"Teach them the lessons of freedom—freedom from all ties, all creeds, all dogmas of religions and sciences, for these religions and sciences unceasingly change, while man's spirit is everlastingly free. Limitations and antiquated ideas are chains that fetter the wings of the soul. Help them to break these chains, so that the nightingales of their spirits may be released to soar upward toward the empyrean realms of light.

"Teach them that Universal Creation is a grand symphony

of which the various Stars and planets are but different strains and notes.

"Teach them that nature is a perpetual becoming, and that unceasing progress is the Eternal Law of all the worlds.

"Teach them that their destiny is to liberate the spirit from material ties and conventions, that they may definitely belong to the Higher Plane of Universal Life, from which they will dominate matter and become builders and creators of a New Order.

"Teach them that the object of being is perpetual advancement toward absolute Perfection and the realization of absolute Happiness."

After He had finished His divine discourse, silence hung and brooded over the throng of disciples, and as I turned and looked into my own heart, I dedicated myself at that sacred moment, to the glorious task of *Teaching*.

THE MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT

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Chapter V

THE MOUNTAIN OF LIGHT

THE Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had bidden us to attend a reception given in honor of Del Aram, the girl scholar from the planet Venus. She was an exquisite creature, a miracle of divine creation, a masterpiece of the heavenly Artists. I had already seen her several times, had talked with her on sundry subjects, and had found her to be extraordinarily intelligent, kind, studious, and a fountain of sympathy and encouragement. She had a most inquiring mind and would ask me, all in the same breath, dozens of questions about the natives of my Star, and then I would revenge myself and ask just as many questions of her, while she would laugh as merrily as any school girl upon the Earth.

At this reception, she had suddenly become the focus of attraction and attention. My eyes followed her every movement and my ears tried to catch her every word, which was welcomed by rippling waves of laughter. I realized now more than at any other time that her step was music and her voice was song. Delicacy was her strength, charity her genius, sensibility her power, joy her armour, and her hopes were of woven sunbeams—such was Del Aram, chosen daughter of Venus. Her mind and her heart, like white and red roses intertwined and interlaced, diffused the fragrance of a most subtle harmony. As she smilingly walked

among us, she strewed celestial flowers on her pathway, which was ours. Indeed, without those smiles, the worlds would be sad, the gardens wild, and I myself would choose to remain a hermit forever! While I was living on Earth, the pearl had seemed to me the image of purity, but Del Aram was purer than pearls. She loomed before me as the promise of a New Race.

The reception was given on the terrace before the Studio of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, which was built on a gentle hill, overlooking the Paradise of Flowers. A celestial orchestra, canopied by the blue sky, played music of ineffable sweetness—a sweetness that could not be known except where joy makes itself eternal. The Students were gathered together in the Studio and without and scattered in groups all over the flowering slopes, which came to an abrupt end before the shimmering Lake of Behjat.

All were awaiting the arrival of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and while thus waiting, I engaged in a vital conversation with Jameh Zar, the Student from a planet in the Cygnus Nebula. It was on the question of war, and he was giving me most constructive information on how they had succeeded in eradicating it in his world, when suddenly, to our wonder and surprise, the sky opened and Nasseem, the Messenger of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, descended upon us, riding on a beam of light. He had been on a tour of inspection among the Stars, and inasmuch as his face appeared to be clouded, we became apprehensive, fearing that he had brought bad news from some part of the Universe.

I forgot my conversation with Jameh Zar, and Del Aram's popularity was for the moment eclipsed, while everyone gathered about Nasseem, importuning him with all kinds of

questions. Without stopping to answer anyone, the vigilent Messenger of the Sky walked rapidly toward the Studio, entered through the door and disappeared behind the curtains of light. His ominous silence and overcast countenance made us fear lest something were tragically wrong on one of the globes. I prayed in my heart for the Earth hoping that the trouble had not emanated from that quarter.

A moment later, the curtains of light were drawn aside and the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher appeared. We were right in our deduction, for He seemed sad and preoccupied. Nevertheless, He walked toward Del Aram and welcomed her with affection and cordiality. Then His eyes began to search for one among the throng of guests, and presently fell upon Sar-sar, the Student from the planet Mars. Sar-sar felt that he was wanted and in no time stood before his master.

"Sar-sar! Peace be upon you!"

"And peace be upon you, my Lord!" he answered as he knelt, his knees shaking with apprehension, yet happy at this mark of recognition.

"Nasseem has brought me sad news from Mars. The Powers of Darkness have declared war upon the Powers of Light and at this very moment, a great battle is being waged between the two forces, and the issue is doubtful."

As the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher spoke, He made a gesture with His hand, and the aerial path became cleared. Then, with infinite pity and anguish in His voice, He cried:

"Look!"

All followed His gaze into the depths of space, and there, to our amazement, we saw the planet Mars, and distinguished the two armies fighting on a crimsoned battlefield.

The Army of Light was in a desperate situation. Their numbers were being decimated by the onslaughts of the powerful enemy. It appeared to us that there was no hope for them. Fighting gallantly, grimly, furiously, in the very face of defeat showing infinite resourcefulness of tactics and strategy, they were steadily being pushed toward the edge of a yawning precipice. It was the most fearful, the most lawless scene of blood, carnage, and confusion that the Heavens had ever witnessed.

We were all struck with horror and unconsciously covered our eyes with the palms of our hands. And then, from that host of spirits gathered together from all the worlds, there arose to the Supreme Throne such heart-rending lamentations that, whenever my mind returns to it, I am shaken as a helpless leaf before the blowing of an irresistable gale.

Oh God! What a scene of hopeless, utterly hopeless despair! It was indeed no other than the mourning of the Heart of the Universe itself at the utter folly and ignorance of the creatures!

At last Sar-sar came to himself and fell at the feet of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, crying aloud:

"O my Lord! Save, save the shattered remnant of the Army of Light! If there be no victory for them now, at least preserve them, so that they may act as seeds for the future enlightenment of Mars!"

"We will do that for your sake, Sar-sar!" And the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher took him in His arms and wiped away his flowing tears. Then He turned to Nasseem, His fleet Messenger of the Sky, and whispered in his ear. The Messenger bowed low, then rose to his full height and

slowly mounted upward. For one moment, he poised himself above us, and then rapidly winged his way in the direction of the planet Mars.

In a moment the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher turned and addressed Sar-sar, including us all in His remarks:

"The Army of Light must increase in number. It must become disciplined, coordinated, unified, and equipped with modern and up-to-date implements—otherwise it will never gain the victory for which we all pray."

"O my beloved Teacher!" Sar-sar cried. "Let me return to Mars now! I will teach the lessons of unity, I will train and organize the Army of Light, I will enthrone the Ideal of Peace in the hearts, I will spread the gospel of reconciliation and brotherhood."

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was touched by the deep earnestness of Sar-sar and replied:

"The time for your departure will come, but not yet, not yet. There are many more principles to be mastered, many more lessons to be learned. But Sar-sar, tell me—do you truly and sincerely desire to establish the kingdom of peace in the hearts of your fellow-beings?"

"My Lord, it is my dream by night and my prayer by day. But I know this also—that I shall never succeed without the power of the Worlds' Holy Spirit."

"Well said, my son! Even *my* teachings will yield no fruit without the confirmation of the Worlds' Holy Spirit. The time has come when you must all make of yourselves pure channels for the wide and universal distribution of this divine Influence."

Jameh Zar, of the planet of Cygnus, answered on behalf of all of us:

"To the accomplishment of this task we shall dedicate our lives, our abilities, our utter devotion and our manifold resources. We will not take rest until the Grand Ideal of Peace is realized in all the worlds and

THE UNITED STATES OF THE STARS

is born amidst the glad hosannas of the Angels!"

The United States of the Stars! What a thought! What a dream! Every atom of my being responded to this call. O the surging and leaping of this Ideal in my mind! It spired, it rose, it climbed, it scaled the puny ridges of the hills of my dreams until I was engulfed in an ocean of ecstasy. I could contain myself no longer and, mad vagabond that I am, I rushed to Jameh Zar, and with the impetuosity and turbulance of a blind cyclone, I embraced him and swept his face with my kisses and with my tears.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was deeply affected by this scene of abandonment to an ideal, and after waiting for me to be calmed, He said:

"Yes, Jameh Zar with one leap has reached the innermost secret of my teachings. He has tapped the source of infinite progress. He is the knower of the Mystery of the Almighty—a mystery which has remained hidden until this time. Prometheus-like, he has climbed the walls of the Forbidden City and has stolen the Sacred Fire! The United States of the Stars! My sons and daughters of the Stars, here is a challenge thrown to you on the plain of the Planet of Love! No other planet could ever have originated such a Dream! Will you be able to understand it? Will you be able to teach it? You alone are my chosen instruments. You alone are capable of casting the whirling reverberation

of this Ideal into the hearts of all my children. Will you do it?"

Impatient of all restraint, burning with an unquenchable fire, I knelt before Him and cried:

"Yes, *we will* cast a whirling reverberation into the hearts of all Thy children. *We will do it.* When I return to Earth, I will blow through this trumpet until all the dead are resurrected. I will raise this Call and no other. I will propagate this Message and only this. I will pave the highway for the realization of this majestic Ideal. In every gathering, in every meeting, I will sing the triumphant, the thrilling, the amazing song of

THE UNITED STATES OF THE STARS."

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher then told us to climb the Mountain of Light, so that from its summit we might pray together for the descent of the Worlds' Holy Spirit and the blessings of Eternal Peace.

When we were assembled on the top of the Mount we found our Beloved Master in our midst. The hour was as the hour of early dawn upon the Earth. The cool breezes of the sky played about us, and the silence of the Universe descended upon our ears like a benison. Then all of a sudden, out of the high Heavens appeared an incomparable Sun, emanating countless streamers of soft, silvery light, which stretched for millions of miles into the super-spatial realm. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher knelt down before this magnificent manifestation that the Creator had prepared for us. It seemed that God Himself was behind and through it, and enraptured by the vision of this blessed Miracle, we all knelt in circles upon circles that spread far and wide to the very foot of the Mountain.

To our amazement, the Sun began to descend, coming nearer and nearer until it stood well nigh above our celestial Teacher, pouring seas of light upon His bare head. Then, out of this transcendency of Light, we heard the very voice of God, clear, resonant, melodious, filling the Heavens:

"This is My beloved Son,
"My First Born,
"My Primal Emanation,
"With Whom I am well-pleased."

I lost myself in the silence that followed this heavenly enunciation, and when I looked up, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was prostrate upon the ground, and the Sun was still hovering over Him. Soon He arose, and with hands outstretched toward the now ascending Sun, He began to pray. There was such love and appeal in His voice that it must have penetrated the breathless and limitless distances of the atmosphere and reached the very Threshold of Divinity. The words of that immortal and ambrosial prayer imprinted themselves immediately upon the tablet of my mind, for I repeated them after Him, and ever since have repeated them every morn and eve:

"O Thou Lord of the Army of Light! We have hearkened to Thy call of service and are at this hour enlisted in the ranks of Thine active Regiment!

"We are Thy Soldiers of Light!

"Strengthen us with Thine invincible Power!

"Give us victory over the forces of Darkness!

"Grant us Thy weapons of Love, Mercy, Justice, and Intelligence!

"Confirm us with Thine Angels, so that we may become

enabled to change the swords into plough-shares and the spears into pruning-hooks.

"Knight us with the sceptre of Truth and crown us with the diadem of non-resistance.

"Let the cohorts of Thy Supreme Concourse in battle-array come to our assistance and give us triumph after triumph.

"Our aim is Thine Aim!

"Our will is Thy Will!

"We are dedicating our all to Thee!

"O Thou Lord of the Army of Light!

"We resolve at this sacred hour, on this Mountain of Light, in Thy Holy and Eternal Presence—

"To change the old worlds into new worlds.

"To transform the venom of hatred into the honey of love.

"To banish the forces of darkness and fill the Stars with the Armies of Light.

"To forgive our inveterate enemies and accept them as our beloved friends.

"To scatter the clouds of ignorance and begem the heavens of the souls with the stars of knowledge.

"To haul down the flag of prejudice and unfurl the standard of universal appreciation.

"To demolish the edifices of war and hostility and lay the basis of the mansions of peace and brotherhood.

"To forget all suggestions of negation and become the visible embodiments of disinterestedness, gentleness, sympathy, love and devotion to the children of all humanities on every Star in Thy celestial realms.

Song of the Caravan

"To destroy the whisperings of sadness and listen to the melodies of the birds of the Paradise of Happiness.

"To extinguish the fires of sectional warfare and misunderstanding in Thy heavenly family and illumine the torch of

THE UNITED STATES OF THE STARS!

"Verily, Thou art the Omnipotent, the Omniscient!

"And verily, Thou art the Lord of the Army of Light!"

The vision of the Sun, the manifestation of the Glory of the Lord, the Voice of God issuing from the shining Orb, the power of the prayer uttered by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher were beyond my ability of endurance, and I was struck unconscious, I do not know for how long.

When I came to myself, I looked about me and saw that the mountain-side was deserted. Only Del Aram, the girl from Venus, remained. She it was who helped me to rise and made me to stand on my feet and then, holding each other's hands and without saying a word, we came down from the Mountain of Light.

DEL ARAM

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കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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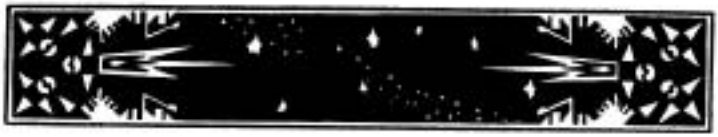

Chapter VI

DEL ARAM

DEL Aram, Jameh Zar and I formed a pact of inseparable comradeship on the Supreme Star and were never far from one another. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher commented upon it and advised others to lay the foundations of such friendship in Heaven—foundations which would remain unshakable throughout all eternity. Both Del Aram and Jameh Zar intrigued my fancy and exerted over me a magic and compelling influence, each in a particular way. Whenever I saw Del Aram, my heart was set in a whirl of emotional exhilaration. Like mountain air, her very presence invigorated me. Often I tried to analyze my feelings for her, but returned from these researches into my subconscious puzzled, uncertain, and unable to explain myself to myself.

She displayed under all circumstances three qualities which enchanted and enthralled me, inducing me to yield to her my unquestioned and unreserved allegiance. These qualities were freedom, courage, and purity.

She staggered me with her open championship of utter, unrestricted freedom. I had never seen its manifestation to this extent upon the Earth. I trembled before her courage—such audacity, such valour, such moral and intellectual prowess,

such intrepid self-reliance were a revelation to me. And her purity was like the whiteness of snow—nay whiter.

On the other hand, Jameh Zar was wise, divinely wise, with a wisdom beyond the grasp of human mind on Earth. It seemed to me that the inhabitants of the planet in the nebula of Cygnus from which he came must have attained to a very high degree of spiritual civilization, for Jameh Zar was the embodiment of discrimination and sagacity, and one could hardly conceive of a more evolved being. He had at his disposal an infinite range of vital and useful information and was a veritable encyclopedia of celestial lore. From the moment of his advocacy of the principle of the United States of the Stars, I had looked upon him as my mentor and guide.

In our daily association, I had discovered in him also three attributes which I admired intensely. These were wisdom, humility and simplicity. Until he began to speak, one could never guess that he was in touch with the Spirit of All Things. From him I learned a passion for perfection—the perfection of beauty—a passion to excel, to surpass, to attain higher, to achieve better.

One day, as we three sat beneath an overshadowing tree beside the blue lake of Behjat, he turned to me, and apropos of the subject which we had been discussing, said:

"The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher is the fulcrum around which all things revolve. You must enter profoundly into it and commune with it. Once you have done this, you will be imbued with that ideal of perfection which is at the core of all His teachings.

"How can I do this Jameh Zar?" I asked.

"By perpetually holding before your eyes the vision of

the Kingdom of Heaven. This is a standard which you must ever follow. It is the goal toward which you must continually aim. Whatever you commence, strive to do to perfection. Hunger and thirst after that which is most worth while having—the perfection of beauty and the beauty of perfection."

"What is the outlook to perfection?" I inquired.

"A sidereal outlook! This is obtainable through being filled with an overflowing good-will toward all your fellow-men and a love for all living creatures. Never allow the letter of the law to bind you, and utter only that which arises from your own heart's fulness."

"And if the people do not understand?" asked Del Aram.

"What difference does it make? In turn be kind to them. It is so easy to be kind and so hard to be hateful and angry. Never retaliate. Try to be the embodiment of gentleness. Even before the injury be committed, forgive him who will injure you. Let your strong faith in the boundless goodness of God and in your fellow-beings be heated to a living conviction."

"On the planet Earth, only a few, a very few, have attained to this degree of moral grandeur," I sighed.

"The Earth is yet in the womb of Time. The hour of its birth will come. On my planet these principles are universally practiced. We assume that the totality of the consciousness of mankind is always right. There is a purity and a simplicity in that divine essence which must be developed through Love. A true leader does not *dictate*—he *leads*. He will never force himself nor his ideas upon his men but will let each one shine, respecting the light that is in him. Let Attraction be your watchword and not Compulsion.

No one will ever be brought into the Kingdom of Heaven by force. Only the forceful, forceless power of Love will attract. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Garden of Reality, the Paradise of Fellowship, the Elysium of Joy, the House of Song. If the people are allowed a single glimpse of it, they will enter of their own accord."

"The trouble with many leaders," I said, "is that they ever look backward, binding the wings of their minds with the bonds of antiquated traditions. They consider the past as a sanctified religion, and embalm the ideas of their dead leaders in the shrines of their living hearts. In time their minds and their hearts become as cemeteries, hoarding the blanched bones of bygone ages, instead of as gardens in which the flowers of new hopes and new idealism grow."

"You are right," answered Jameh Zar. "Each individual must form his own spiritual viewpoint and pave his own way of life. We must not—and especially is this true of spiritual leaders—we must not look behind for all that is best. We must look on before us. And, once we accustom our sight and insight to gazing into the future, we will see higher Beings ahead—flaming beacons, far on the crest of the tide of Time, beckoning us on and on. Not that we should disparage the past—far from it! We should use it and work to fulfill its unrealized and shattered ideals. But we should irrevocably recognize our responsibility and allegiance to the Future. Our tone of march must be set on the words:

FORWARD! AHEAD! ADVANCE!"

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!" cried Del Aram.

I had become so absorbed in Jameh Zar's utterances of

wisdom that it seemed that I had forgotten her presence, and both of us were jolted out of our mellow dream-philosophy. She injected such vibrancy into those three words that they appeared no longer to be those of Jameh Zar. Here was a veritable war-cry—

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!" She thrilled me with the surge of her voice.

"It is easy to say it in this peaceful Heaven, but what are we going to do with it? Who will train us, so that when we return to our respective Stars, we may fling these words like brands of fire into the cold hearts of our fellowmen, start a universal conflagration and burn all the useless debris of the past? Tell me, who will train us?"

Jameh Zar's non-combative, peaceful nature shrank before this whirlwind of defiance, and as for me, I stood dumb, amazed, but in my heart unutterably happy.

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!" It seemed that the very air about us was pulsing with her cry. Then, springing to her feet, she caught up her scarf which was hanging from a tree-branch, and with its azure folds streaming behind her, she ran along the edge of the lake, the echo of her voice reverberating through the hills and dales—

"FORWARD! AHEAD! ADVANCE!"

I watched her with delight. Here indeed was an inspired leader! Here was a celestial hurricane before which nothing could stand! Next to her we appeared so incapacitated, so helpless—two old crabs on the sea-shore of non-entity! Jameh Zar's eyes were glued on her dancing, whirling form as she flew along the edge of the lake. Then he turned to me and said:

"Vagabond! I am growing too old. That is what the Stars need! With such a leader, any race might accomplish

the impossible! She is the embodiment of the Message of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher!"

"Yes, yes!" I could say no more.

Before we were aware of it, she had returned from her race, in no way exhausted, and throwing herself upon the grass beside us, she cried out with all the exuberance of youth:

"I can show you how to use effectively this inspired war-cry of yours!"

She looked at Jameh Zar, but I broke in—

"Show us how, please!"

"Very well, come with me and I will show you."

She arose with determination written on her face.

"I will stay here and dream," said Jameh Zar.

"Not at all! You will come with us. I will show you how to use your own weapons. I admit that you are wise, very, very wise, and I would rather have you as an ally than the most experienced captain of industry. Yet, at the same time, you are impractical, and probably you could learn from me how to use your own wisdom to great and lasting advantage."

Neither of us could argue with her, and not being able to withstand her persuasion, we decided to follow her. I was full of eager anticipation as to what she was about to do. Jameh Zar was resigned and imperturbably calm.

* * *

The natural Amphitheatre was open to the sky. God had carved it out of the rocks of ages. Multitudes of the Students from the different planets, both men and women, had taken their seats.

Here it was that since our registration in the Universal

University we had come almost daily to attend various lectures. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had spoken to us from this platform, and frequently the Students had been invited to give reports on the progress of civilization on their respective globes.

When Del Aram told us to follow her we were unaware of the fact that she had been invited to speak on this occasion as the representative from Venus, but as we entered the Amphitheatre, a way was made for her and she was escorted to the platform where the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher welcomed her. We were left unnoticed on the edge of the moving crowd.

With a few felicitous words which He alone could have chosen, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher introduced Del Aram to the waiting audience, and she came forward in her dazzling beauty and stood a moment immovable, dominating that unnumbered host. Then she raised her clear silver voice which reached to every part of the amphitheatre:

"Women of the Worlds! I bring you greetings from your sisters on Venus. We are all members of one great cosmic family. Our ideals and interests are inter-related and interlaced. The women of Venus have for successive ages fought for the boon of Freedom, and I stand here to tell you that Freedom is our natural birthright. God is not a *slaveholder,* but a *kind Father*. He wishes us to drink deep from the chalice of Freedom. The cause of Freedom is the Cause of God. Freedom is the religion of the women of Venus. They welcome no other. The soul longs for liberty from the date of its first conscious moments.

"The time has arrived when we—the Women of the Stars—should plough the soil of the hearts, so that it may

produce a free and fearless race. I declare unto you that when the universal law of Freedom is enthroned, men will not become diseased nor will they ever grow old.

"Women of the Worlds!

"You are the apostles of Freedom!

"I entreat you to choose for your guide the Angel of Freedom! He shall cut pathways, East and West, Up and Down, and will cause you to soar on his tireless wings!

"Women of the Worlds!

"You are the soldiers of Freedom! Freedom from the mountain heights has unfurled her waving standard! She has rent the sable robe of the night of slavery and has planted the stars of glory there! You are the invincible armies of Freedom. Train yourselves! Be ever ready for the war against the forces of bigotry and intolerance!

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!"

I could never describe the dynamic quality that was in her voice. She looked straight into my eyes and then into those of Jameh Zar, as if to say: "Here, the first shot is fired!"

The vast audience thrilled to her words, and itself took up the cry—

"FORWARD! AHEAD! ADVANCE!"

They kept on repeating it until Del Aram bade them be silent, and when quiet was restored, she continued:

"My Sisters of the Stars!

"All is Freedom!

"You are free with the Freedom of God; free in the might of Truth; free in the wisdom of great knowing and heart-vision; free to soar toward the infinite sky of Freedom.

"Hurl, hurl, I say to you, hurl this consciousness of Freedom into the cosmic spaces!

"The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher has decreed that with one mighty affirmation, every shackle of injustice, every bond of erring thought, every fettering condition, shall fall away from all—men and women and children—men and women and children—inhabiting His worlds infinite!

"God has given you your Freedom; for you, even you, are *now* as free as God is free—to express in starry ideals, in radiant actions, in sunlit dreams, in rhythmic life, your primal love for liberty and your irrepressible desire for the spiritualization of your fellow-beings. God has given you your Freedom without limit. Its etherial spaces invite you, with all the graces of the boundless sky.

"Rise, rise, I adjure you, rise as a bird in flight; as the river in freshet; as a soul in God-ecstacy; as the wind in the wood-land! Free! Teach your fellow-men to come out of the imprisoning circle of false limitations, of mind slavery, of soul abasement, of industrial and social bondage. That you may break from each fetter, seen or unseen, carnate or disincarnate, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher has flung to you the torch of your Eternal Freedom. Grasp this shining banner, set aglow with cataracts of flames and flowers! Hold it aloft! Follow it with devotion, and let the worlds follow it with exultant cries of rejoicing! Command its supremacy! It is yours, from the beginning in God, clear through to your ending in God.

"God is your Freedom—Freedom is your God—as within you there He lives, living out your being in truth and beauty. Free! Free! Free to rise, to act, to dream, to be yourselves and to associate and play with the Father,

whose very nature is life, love and light. Teach your people to forget doubts and fears. Teach them to deny all limitations. Teach them to refuse all hinderings. For verily, verily, they are shadows—shadows—shadows—and shadows are nothing, as you may see when the vibrant sunbeams smite them through.

"O be glad with a great gladness that only Freedom is true. Freedom means to your soul what air means to the bird—to soar and to sing. In the sky nothing limits, nothing limits. Nothing fetters you in all the Universe! Its spaces are alight with the Sun of Reality, which is Freedom. Oh, my Sisters of the Stars! Oh, my beloved Brothers of the Heavens! Strike, strike off the chains of falsehood—with your own hands, strike! Then rise, rise above all that seems limiting—it but seems—for the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher has told you again and again, and I am but repeating His words: There are no limits in God and you are of God's being a very part. Then live as immortals should! Cast off all limiting shadows, and abide in glory—living in and for the Glory of God—the Glory of God, gloriously living in you.

"Let us rise to a higher plane of the realization of our unity in Freedom. Jameh Zar has recommended (thousands of eyes were immediately focused upon him) that there should be some day a UNITED STATES OF THE STARS. I come before you with another suggestion: Let us all, as the representatives of the sidereal worlds, come together under the divine guidance of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and write for the first time

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF THE STARS

And, when we return to our homes in the different parts of the Universe, we will carry to our peoples a gift more valuable than all the treasures of the worlds."

The audience was electrified with this unheard-of conception. It arose, a tumultuous expanse of faces, a vast forest of moving beings, a thrilled and wonder-struck assemblage. Someone cried out:

"FORWARD! AHEAD! ADVANCE!"

Another voice was heard: "O Del Aram! Show us the way!"

A third was raised above the waving crowd: "Come! Lead us! We will follow!"

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was all benevolence. With what pleasure, with what satisfaction, He looked upon Del Aram!

She stood silent for a long while, looking over the multitude of expectant faces, and then with a wave of her hand she quieted them, saying:

"All, all, all! Men and women—all of you—arise, arise! Let us mount into the Heaven of Freedom, and in our upward and onward flight, God the Free will be the wind and the wings of our Great Attainment."

The audience now broke loose and became an uncontrolled sea of emotion. Intoxicated by the wine of her eloquence, they surged toward the platform whereon she stood, erect, serene, still mistress of the situation. Her imperturable attitude awed them, and they became momentarily silent. Suddenly, she left her position and stood among them, crying:

"FORWARD! AHEAD! ADVANCE!"

Then the people found their voices, and as if by magic,

formed themselves into a huge line of procession. Before I realized what had happened, I was walking beside Del Aram at the head of her Army of Freedom, waving her heaven-blue scarf above my head, and crying aloud with tears in my eyes:

"Hail the birth of the United States of the Stars!"

Del Aram looked at me happily and called back:

"On toward the Sunrise of Freedom!"

Sar-sar, from the planet Mars, was close at hand, filling the air with his voice:

"Welcome the Constitution of the United States of the Stars!"

And the Students on all sides were clamouring:

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!

"Victory! Victory!

"Joy! Joy!

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!"

I looked all over the Amphitheatre for Jameh Zar, but could not find a trace of him. Then my eyes searched for the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and Del Aram seemed to read my mind.

"There He is!" And she pointed Him out to me.

I gazed at Him. He was still standing on the platform, watching His Army of Freedom, His Soldiers of Light. I thought that I saw His hands raised toward the heavens, as though about to bless us, and then I was carried away on the tide of that universal, cosmic revolution.

Del Aram was by my side.

RAMA VARMA RESEARCH INSTITUTE.
TRICHUR. COCHIN STATE.
24 JUN 1936

DOUST PARAST

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

Chapter VII

DOUST PARAST

DOUST Parast, the Student from Alpha Centauri, was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the new idea of an Interstellar Confederation. I was drawn to him from the very first time that we talked together on this vital subject. To him, it had become the primary object of creation, to which all other things were secondary. Our Beloved Teacher was in full accord with the plan for Eternal Conciliation among all the planets, and His dominant spirit reflected itself in all the talks, conversations and resolutions of Doust Parast.

On the other hand, the two fruitful suggestions of Jameh Zar and Del Aram, namely, the United States of the Stars and its Constitution, had set all our minds on the track of hard thinking and vast imaginings. In every circle, there was the utmost freedom of discussion, exhaustive interchanges of views and abundance of detailed explanations, and already a number of planks had been presented to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher for the platform of our Dream-Constitution.

The third idea which kept us in a ferment of spiritual construction was supplied by Doust Parast. It was the startling plan of actual communication between the planets. He believed that this was possible—nay rather, that it was

within the range of practical and mathematical certainty. He had reason to know that already there were certain beings on the various globes who were in spiritual communication, and who influenced each other in diverse and demonstrable ways. Some of these beings were living in his own world. He had met them and they had proven to him that such was the case. When Jameh Zar and Del Aram heard him speak of this for the first time, they appeared so easily convinced that it struck me that they already knew something about it, and that possibly they themselves were among those rare souls.

Doust Parast also knew that there was a radio-active energy hidden in the Universe. He had named it "Borag-Reez." The scientists had as yet been unable to discover it, because the inhabitants of the worlds were still too immature to put it into use. The humanities of the Stars were evolving very slowly, but he hoped that with the return of the Graduates from the Universal University, the progress of civilization everywhere would be greatly accelerated. If this happened, and he was convinced that it would, then Borag-Reez would be discovered at one and the same time on all the Stars. Through the wide-spread use of Borag-Reez as a propelling energy, the denizens of the globes would be able to travel easily and cheaply from one planet to another with a minimum of risk to themselves and to their ships-of-air. Through Borag-Reez, messages would be sent from constellation to constellation, and as yet unimagined means of communication would be established between the members of the Celestial Family.

On the day that Nasseem, the Messenger of the Sky, had returned from his mission to the planet Mars, Jameh Zar,

Del Aram, Sar-sar, Doust Parast, myself and a few others had gathered at the invitation of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher in one of the delectable gardens of the Supreme Star, to discuss the reassuring news which he had brought. It appeared that at the moment when the discouraged and hopeless Soldiers of Light were about to be annihilated, Nasseem had caused a black cloud to envelope the Army of Darkness, and leaving them to panic and confusion, had reassembled the scattered Warriors of Truth, and guided them into a protected and sequestered valley. There he had left them, in peace and security, to wax and grow strong.

The gratitude of Sar-sar for the heavenly intercession which had saved his people knew no bounds, and he prayed that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher would endue him with power and illumination, so that he himself might lead them when the time was ripe, to an overwhelming victory. We all joined in this request, and the conviction was borne in upon us that it would indeed be so.

Then someone asked Doust Parast to explain his theory in regard to communication between the Stars.

After a moment's pause, he said:

"To-day, a very few wise men of the planets are commencing to speak of the unification of their religions and of the establishment of peace among their governments and races, as well as of the dim and uncertain prospect of a United States of their respective worlds, and they are considered by the most enlightened as uncommonly wise and universal. All this may be true for today, but I know full well that the time is coming when more progressive spiritual technicians will influence the globes with their wider outlook and vaster ideals, and they will speak about the plans

which we are now evolving on this Planet of Love. Already two of these have been revealed to us by Jameh Zar and Del Aram. Mine is a more practical, a more scientific one. It is the application of those dreams to the every-day relationships of the humanities of the Worlds. It is the plan of actual communication. by means of outward, visible vehicles of transportation, between one Star and another. In other words: the discovery of tangible facilities for inter-stellar voyages, bringing as results—the unification of the Stars, a Universal Confederation of all the inhabited globes hanging in the blue firmament; the establishment of a Universal Democracy, a Sidereal Republic among all the heavenly bodies, and the inauguration of an Interplanetary Parliament on the fortunate Star which for the time being will be under the spiritual presidency of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher."

My head reeled with these gigantic propositions. How could any mind hold such super-physical dreams and live? How could he? I did not know what to say, and yet I wished to say something to bring a moment's respite from these unnatural flights. At last I ventured haltingly:

"Are not these dreams too fanciful, or at least is not the day of their realization so distant that they are practically useless for general discussion?"

O, I can never forget the way Doust Parast looked at me! There was such pity in his eyes, and then he said in a very gentle, a very, very firm voice:

"O Son of Earth! That day is already registered on the Tablet of Fate! It is mentioned in the Preserved Book! The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher has decreed that it shall come to pass. Here, at this hour, we are laying the foundation for the unfoldment of these ideals. Rest assured!"

Then, as though I had never interrupted, he returned to his main theme:

"When that Day has actually dawned, the inhabitants of the globes will read the records of their ancestors, and will be highly amused at their incoherent prattlings. They will think of practically all of them as crude barbarians and narrow-minded bigots who occupied their time, for want of better intellectual and spiritual exercise, with the provincialities of their tiny worlds—infinitestimal specks of dust on the frontier of the Celestial Map."

Here Jameh Zar intervened with the following remarks:

"O Doust Parast! Go slowly in the revealing of these great mysteries. There may be babes in our midst, and we must feed them with milk and not with strong food." He looked at me and smiled. I might have resented this wholly unnecessary remark had I not known Jameh Zar so well. He did not mean it. Yet Doust Parast took it seriously, for he said:

"Why should we withhold the mysteries from each other? We are here to unfold them! I am sure that there are no babes in this Universal University. These are the chosen ones of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and He never makes a mistake in His selection."

Then he again took up the thread of his remarks:

"In that future time, there will arise illumined and analytical historians of the Stars who will sit down to write the histories of their respective globes, and probably the most conscientious among them will give one half of a page to all that has transpired up to that day in the realms of science, art and theology, giving to it the descriptive title of 'Primitive Superstitions'. Other historians will have so much to write concerning the new revelations of God

and Nature, that they will simply look upon the previous efforts of men and races as non-existent, and begrudging them even a paragraph, will commence their histories with the Unity of Life and Action on all the planets."

This was a terrible arraignment, and I could not bear the thought that all the achievements of my people should be classified by unknown and imaginary historians as "Primitive Superstitions". It was going too far, and I was determined to fight the point—even in Heaven! I was sure that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher would not thus label the sum total of our labors in all the fields of human efforts, so I turned to Him, as the court of last appeal:

"Is all this which Doust Parast says indeed true?"

"Of course, my Vagabond! And he has told us only the A.B.C. There are greater things yet to be revealed."

I gasped. I was confounded. My scaffolding gone, I had nothing on which to stand, and I made up my mind that after all I was a fool, and that it was high time for me to learn something. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher understood my suffering, and He said:

"All is well! My children on every Star are ascending the mountain, step by step, slowly but surely. Truth is One. Every age, according to its capacity, receives a larger vision of the *Same Truth*. I do not feed my children on falsehood. Truth is a gorgeous tapestry woven by the fingers of the Immortal Weaver the cartoon of which is suspended in the Gallery of the Supreme Star. Jameh Zar, Del Aram and Doust Parast have been speaking to us of the beauty of the Conception as a *whole*, of which some day, in God's own good time, replicas will be made and placed on exhibit in the galleries of every inhabited planet. Then, in turn, spiritual artists will learn from them, copy them,

and instruct their fellow-men in understanding them. But, for the immediate present, let your mission be to *lead men to the Star of Peace.*"

"Where is the Star of Peace?" Sar-sar inquired, for it seemed to him that there never would be peace on Mars.

"The Star of Peace is in the heaven of every heart, but you must disperse the clouds so that it may shine radiantly."

"What is peace and what is war?" questioned the turbulent Del Aram.

The Beloved Teacher smiled at her. Then He said calmly:

"Peace is Light; war is Darkness.

"Peace is Life; war is Death.

"Peace is Love; war is Hatred.

"Peace is Heaven; war is Hell.

"Peace is Knowledge; war is Ignorance.

"Peace is Truth; war is Falsehood.

"Peace is the Foundation of God; war is the Institution of the Devil.

"Peace is conducive to the illumination of the World of Humanity; war is the instrument for the destruction of the Edifice of Creation."

"What are the actual measures," I asked, "which we should adopt on Earth against war and in favor of peace?"

"Mothers are the real makers of Peace; they should feed their children on the milk of Peace. School teachers should teach their pupils the lessons of Peace. Ministers should propagate the laws of Peace. Newspapers should write continually about the glories of Peace. You must maintain a University of Peace, the aim of which will be to train world statesmen, who will in time foster a better understanding among the nations. You must also create a Founda-

tion, the resources of which will be directed toward the promotion of a universal basis for commercial, industrial and political arbitration. Likewise, let the people nominate a Committee of both men and women representing every nationality, whose sole concern shall be the development of the ideals of Peace. Abolish your standing armies and navies. They are breeders of fear and suspicion. Declare complete disarmament. Write a Universal Anthem to be sung by all the children of the Earth, and create a Universal Flag—the symbol of man's aspiration for Unity. Prepare a code of international law and morality. Hold periodical International Conferences on all subjects—religious, scientific, artistic. Build up Institutions of Fellowship among the youth of the world. Develop a universal conscience of justice and do away with national greed, selfishness and imperialistic ambitions. In brief: Annihilate every object made to hurt or destroy or kill. The manufacture of all such articles must be prohibited."

Hakim Hakimian of the planet Uranus had been listening attentively without saying a word, but now he asked:

"How long, O Beloved Teacher, must it be before these ideals are translated into practical facts?"

"Not long. I assure you, not very long. Already, the seeds are scattered in the fields of the hearts and the minds. They are germinating. The sun of Divine Providence is shining; the breezes of Spiritual Confirmations are blowing, and soon these seeds will push their tiny heads above the soil. You are the ones who must greatly help and inspire the lovers of Peace. For *this reason*, I have brought you here."

Then He turned His gaze again to me and said:

"When you return, tell your statesmen and your leaders

that war must not be, because it is aganst the good-pleasure of God. Tell them that war, which like a monstrous vulture is tearing at the living hearts of men, must be banished from the face of the Earth; that war, which shatters to fragments the glories of Civilization and which tramples Beauty and Justice with its gory feet, must trouble the world no more. Tell them that on every occasion they must voice the aspirations of mankind for Peace; that they must solemnly and sincerely declare their condemnation of war, renouncing it forever as an instrument which undermines the felicity of every family. Tell them that the time has at last arrived when they must put into action the faith and idealism of their fellow-men. Tell them that the Master of the World has broadcasted His fiat, and it is this: "From now on, my worlds and my children who live in them must enjoy the blessings of Peace. Set in motion in every country a propaganda for Peace, and advertise war out of existence!"

I was deeply impressed by the marvelous lucidity, rationality and feasibility of all that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had been telling us, and I wished in my heart that the people of the Earth could hear Him expounding these policies. Suddenly, a thought flashed across my mind and I spoke it aloud—

"Master! Give me a message, that I may deliver it to my people!"

"Everything that I have told you is a message for them, for you are a channel through which the Graces of my Father will flow. And when you stand in their meetings, declare further to them, speaking with power and authority: 'O leaders of humanity! O wise men of the Earth! O captains of industries! O statesmen of governments!

Awake! The light which shone upon the summit is now resting at your feet. Turn your eyes upon it and let it guide your steps in the direction of peace. You are standing at the threshold of a New Age, where a New Spirit is waiting to raise mankind to new levels of endeavor and achievement. Give heed to the soul-cry of humanity, and prevent all future wars! Did I hear you whisper, 'Impossible'? Nothing is impossible when man is assisted by the power of the Worlds' Holy Spirit. Our most urgent problem is the establishment of International Peace. Until that is attained, all humanitarian projects will be worthless. Of what profit to lighten the burden of the people, if they are to be killed at your next world war? And killed they will be, if steps are not immediately taken to crush the head of the serpent—your present-day military lunacy and competition in armament. I abjure you, in the name of all that is sacred to you—relieve the toilers of your nations of the increasing weight of taxation, and release them from the thraldom of fear and suspicion.

" 'I do not plead for the old and decrepit, nor for the mature, but for the younger generations. You have had your wars; you have filled your pockets with illicit gain; you have made your names and your fame through the shedding of innocent blood; you have played with the souls of the people as with pawns in a game of chess; you have had your dance of death on the battlefield—and now you have retired to gloat over your ill-gotten fortunes and to spend your last days in the lap of luxury. God alone will deal with you. Your are in the hollow of His Hand. You cannot escape Him!

" 'But when the next war comes, it will be these boys, grown to the prime of manhood, who will go forth to kill

and to be killed. It will be these girls who will have to wait, and wait, and wait for the return of their sweethearts and their husbands. You now denounce our efforts to bring about Peace as the delusions of brain-cracked pacifists, while all the time you are feeding deep-seated enmities among the nations abroad which these, your children, will have to pay for with their blood.

"'O men! O women! I too have slept the sleep of the heedless, but the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher awakened me, and caused me to soar to His Firmament of Truth.

" 'I come to you with the Message of the Sky!

" 'I come to you with the breath of the Worlds' Holy Spirit!

" 'The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher has sent me!

" 'I declare unto you in His Holy Name—

" 'The doors of the Kingdom of Peace are opened wide.

"'Enter!

" 'The delectable gardens of Peace are abloom.

" 'Gather its flowers!

" 'The lordly banquet of Peace is spread before you.

" 'Eat of it!

" 'The fountains of the meadows of Peace are flowing!

" 'Drink from them!

" 'The broad highway of the country of Peace is paved.

" 'Walk therein with singing lips!

" 'The brightest day-spring of Peace has dawned.

" 'Awaken!

" 'Hear the Voice of the God of Peace calling to you from the Supreme Star—'Come unto me O ye children of men! Come unto me O ye who are thirsty, and drink of

this sweet water which is descending in torrents upon all parts of the Celestial Spheres!

"'NOW IS THE TIME!
"'NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME'!"

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had filled my heart to overflowing!

I left His Presence, and alone under the Stars, I wept.

കേരളസാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി

HAKIM HAKIMIAN

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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Chapter VIII

HAKIM HAKIMIAN

WHEN the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher welcomed us for the first time in the Paradise of Flowers, I saw standing beside me a great and shining soul. I was infinitely attracted to him and touched him with the tips of my fingers, and he turned around and looked at me in a direct and friendly manner. However, when I attempted to talk to him, I met with no success, for not having as yet drunk of the Elixir of Immortality, we were unable to understand each other's speech.

Later, I found him to be Hakim Hakimian, from the ring-girdled planet Saturn. His was the most orderly and methodical mind that I have ever encountered. He was a colossus of brain-energy and possessed an extraordinarily retentive memory. He was nothing less than a whirling, spinning mass of resilient electricity, sending out to all who approached him vibrations of strength, assurance and equanimity. He revelled in facts, figures, charts, maps and all the concrete manifestations of the higher mathematical sciences. Nothing, positively nothing, escaped his keen faculties. He placed every problem under the microscope of his mind, revealing startling results. He combined a cold analysis of every thing and every person with a warm and sympathetic understanding. He reasoned logically and

produced his stern and irrefutable conclusions through the laws both of deduction and induction.

Now, to acquaint you still further with Hakim Hakimian, I will digress a moment and tell you something about the Universal Library of the Supreme Star. This library consisted of vast and spacious galleries, lined with thousands upon thousands of shelves, filled with books—apparently without number. It was divided into numerous departments many of which were complete buildings in themselves, and each of these departments contained the books, manuscripts, charts, etc., which held exclusive reference to one of the inhabited planets. The architecture of the buildings was most amazing, most impressive. They stood together, a city in themselves—great windows, walls of marble, white, rose, cream and blue; opalescent domes swung wide, and gleaming towers piled high into the heavens. The names of the different Stars were worked in letters of gold on the beautiful facades, and the upper parts of the exterior and interior walls bore Inscriptions from the writings of the Prophets and men of letters who had appeared upon the various globes. I often strolled with Hakim Hakimian through this inspiring domain and copied the inscriptions with the intention of using them as future reference. At such times, he would mock me indulgently because I relied on pen and paper, while his memory retained everything that he had once read.

You can easily imagine the magnitude of this institution, which was in fact the Universal Library of the Inter-Stellar Universe. Thousands of clerks were here employed to index, file, and distribute the books of the different departments. Through Hakim Hakimian's genius for order, a perfect and yet simple system had been evolved by which

the librarian of each building could produce on request any book or manuscript within the twinkling of an eye.

I frequently passed through the vestibules of the Earth's library, which compared to the others was of negligible size, and used but by few readers. It happened on several occasions that I found myself there entirely alone. On the other hand, the libraries of some of the older Stars were thronged with eager and enthusiastic seekers. When I asked the librarian of the Earth's section why his was so neglected, he answered that inasmuch as our globe was one of the most recent, both as to origin and life, it had produced as yet but very little history worthy of preservation in the Library of the Supreme Star!

Having described the Universal Library in as few words as possible, I can return to Hakim Hakimian, and tell you about some of the intellectual idiosyncrasies and synthetic oddities of the apparently shoreless ocean of his mind. When not attending lectures or classes, he would spend hours in the various buildings of the Universal Library, making detailed and exhaustive researches into the status of the inhabited and habitable planets of the limitless Universe. Jameh Zar told me that there was practically no Star the conditions of which Hakim Hakimian had not investigated, and many of the students remarked that they had seen him poring over ancient manuscripts in every part of the Universal Library. One day I found him in the library of the Earth but he stayed there for only half an hour. I asked the librarian if he came there often, and received the answer that this had been his first visit.

He supplemented his researches with almost nightly observations of the Stars from the Celestial Observatory. This observatory, with its giant telescopes and other in-

struments for annihilating space, was one of the wonders of the Supreme Star.

Now, you can make your own deductions as to the uncanny vastness of the erudition of Hakim Hakimian.

The complicated and deeply significant results of these painstaking labors were embodied by him in a simple chart, which even a child could have understood. It gave the name of each Star, its exact position in the heavens, its climate, its density, its origin and the time of its birth, its annals and its history, its flora and fauna, its geography and geology, its population and races, the occupations and industries of its peoples, its religions and languages, its governments and constitutions, its civilizations and cultures, its arts and sciences, its inventions and discoveries, the names and short biographies of its outstanding leaders in various fields—in brief that simple chart contained vital and necessary information concerning every living and inhabited planet in the universal sky.

When the general body of the Students came to know of the all-inclusiveness of Hakim Hakimian's intellect, they clamoured for the opportunity of hearing a lecture on his own subject, and so much interest had been aroused concerning the Chart, which like a key opened the doors to the House of Knowledge, that when the appointed time arrived, the Amphitheatre was filled to overflowing and the encircling hills were dotted with expectant groups. The Chart, which was swung high above the platform, was of gigantic proportions and seemed to be suspended in the sky, and its letterings and designs, presented in luminous colors, were accessible to the vision of the most distant. Many of the Students had come to see what relative importance

would be given to their own planets, and I myself was animated with the same curiosity.

A matter which puzzled me as the lecture progressed was the fact that Hakim Hakimian did not refer to any of the Stars by names which were known to us on the Earth, and when at the close I repeated to some of the Students a few of the fantastic appelations—often derivated from their resemblances to certain of our own animals—which we had given to their groups of shining worlds, they were moved to great hilarity by the simplicity of our turn of mind.

Well, Hakim Hakimian delivered a most comprehensive, a most instructive and really a most interesting address, all the while ilustrating it from his Chart. The great audience was captured and enthralled by the corruscations of his gorgeous mind. Great heavens, what an intellect! A polished diamond, it shone, reflected and revolved before us, with its thousands of brilliant facets. The emotional earnestness of Del Aram and her declaration of Freedom had carried me on the wings of a tempest, but this super-intellectual giant nailed me to my seat, crushing me under the weight of his organized knowledge.

I had been following his words with so much concentration that the end of the address took me by surprise, and I was suddenly aware of a stinging pain in my heart. It was inconceivable! This man had delivered a whole lecture on the various Stars and had not, so much as by one word, referred to mine! I was aghast, humiliated before my colleagues. I would not have objected had my Star been listed as the very last in the scale of general civilization, for by this time I had learned so many things about the culture of other Stars that I had developed a certain modesty in regard to my own, but to be so wantonly and completely ignored—

this I could not endure! I was sitting at the time between Jameh Zar and Del Aram, both of whom felt the rising tide of my righteous indignation, and they sympathized with me.

At last, unable to contain myself longer, I sprang to my feet and protested in the most vigorous language at my command. A startled thrill ran through the audience. The idea of daring to oppose Hakim Hakimian and of accusing him of partiality was inconceivable. He was the accepted authority on the subject of inter-stellar civilizations, and not one soul would have had the temerity to challenge his statements. Murmuring uneasily, the electrified throng waited for his answer.

You may believe it or not, but the especial honors bestowed upon me by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, my constant companionship with Jameh Zar, who was universally esteemed, my unconcealed admiration for Del Aram, and notably my championship of her cause in standing at her side during the recent outburst for Freedom had won for me—may I call it a well-deserved or would you call it an ill-deserved—popularity? These and other circumstances had singled me out as one of the conspicuous figures among those who dwelt in the neighborhood of their Lord. In other words, in spite of my innate modesty, I had become a notorious character in Heaven. Many of the Students, feeling that the Earth must be a desirable place because its sole representative attracted and received so much attention, had come to me, asking innumerable questions, and a few of them had expressed a secret inclination to visit it in the near future. Thus, in protesting against Hakim Hakimian's neglect, I felt that I had scored a great point, for I had unconsciously presented the cause of the whole Earth before the bar of the Supreme Judge. Long

enough had we been snubbed by other Stars! It was high time to come out and show a little pugnacity, and demonstrate that we were alive!

Hakim Hakimian looked at me in amazement. He had always known me as a pupil, a questioner, one who knelt before him, begging for crumbs from the table of wisdom. He did not recognize me as an antagonist, challenging his sense of justice in a public gathering. Then, turning his eyes from me, he glanced over the faces of the impatient, sympathetic crowd. Now, if nothing else, Hakim Hakimian was a psychologist, and he immediately recognized the fact that the entire audience sincerely desired to know something about the home of this man who was called on every side the Vagabond of Eternity.

He looked and looked at his Chart and seemed extraordinarily puzzled. Probably he could not explain to himself the sudden fame of the Earth—so utterly insignificant on the Chart. He was cornered! I had cornered him!

But, in reality, I knew better. No one could ever corner Hakim Hakimian, he was too big. No one could take him at a disadvantage.

He continued to examine the Chart, and finally located the Earth, which he had registered under the name of "Kesh-makesh". Then, without a moment's hesitation, he proceeded to deliver a most masterly abstract brief of its history. It took him only five minutes, as we count minutes on the Earth! Following this, he said:

"O light-bearers of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher! I wish that I had more to say about the home of our popular Vagabond, but Kesh-makesh is still very young. Its history is only that of yesterday. This I consider to be nothing in

its disfavor, for some of the planets are getting pretty old and we are sorely in need of new, husky and vigorous children in the Star-family, so that they may come up and take our places when we shall have journeyed the way of all Stars.

"At the present date, Kesh-makesh has none of the hallmarks of real civilization as we term it here. Let it be stated frankly and fearlessly that its evolution at this hour has scarcely begun. Nevertheless, I can give our Vagabond great and abounding hope as to a sudden and unexpected change. Everyone knows that the very nature of my studies forbids the use of hyperbole, but in the approaching development of Kesh-makesh I find something worthy of eloquence. I see it now; it will grow and grow, until some day it will assume the proportion of a world-enlightening sun. Its average inhabitants are as yet but a transitional species between the animals which roved through its jungles and prowled on its plains in 'moments' past and the illumined and divinely beautiful race of the future. They are not bad, not fallen, not degenerate, not 'born in sin', but simply 'man in the making'.

"Here is the dough of the future humanity of Kesh-makesh—not the bread, but a substance from which men worthy of the name shall ultimately be produced."

He stopped, and as though reminded of something very funny, began to laugh, then he looked at me quizzically and continued:

"I am going to use a few illustrations, the full significance of which most of those present will be unable to grasp, but I think that the Vagabond, with his sense of justice and especially with his sense of humor, will appreciate them and will not consider me unduly disrespectful. They are:

"As much expect a mouse to sing or a mule to be docile as to expect the average materially-minded man of the present generation of Kesh-makesh to apprehend the higher ideals of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. A landscape cannot be appreciated by a cow, a symphony by a horse, nor a sonnet by a dog, however intelligent these may be, and in saying this, I want to assure everybody that there is not the least trace of malice in my heart for any living or dead Star."

I was struck by the apt illustrations of Hakim Hakimian, for I had often met and conversed with these very people on the Earth. Yet he gave me so much hope concerning our future—and it is the future and not the past which counts—that I was willing to admit all that he said, and only desired to learn a few effective remedies for our prolonged immaturity. It is true that his comparisons disconcerted me not a little, and my only consolation was that most of the Students could not understand his ironical points, yet quite a large number had laughed, proving beyond the peradventure of a doubt that there were similar animals and similar humans on other globes.

My little encounter in the Amphitheatre of the Supreme Star with Hakim Hakimian resulted in a strengthening of the sympathy which we had always felt for each other, and from that time on, he included himself in the close fellowship which already existed among Del Aram, Jameh Zar, and myself. We four made a strong and powerful combination which, as events progressed, became more and more advantageous to the interests of the Earth. The Earth was now known in Heaven. Many dreamed of it as a land of possibilities, and this to such an extent that quite a large

number wished to exchange their security in Heaven for an adventure on the Earth.

While this interest and curiosity was gaining in momentum, Jameh Zar and Del Aram assisted me in the formation of a "Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society," the membership of which consisted of those souls who desired to migrate from Heaven to Earth. All of a sudden, the library of the Earth had become popular, and many Students were seen in its reading-rooms. Likewise, the director of the Observatory was besieged with requests to turn his giant telescopes toward Kesh-mekesh, and hours were spent in the observation of the Earth moving in the depths of space. Del Aram, Jameh Zar and I absorbed ourselves in plans and preparations. Hakim Hakimian gave a portion of his time to a fresh study of the Earth, discovering a number of original facts and figures which added fuel to his growing enthusiasm for our cause. All this feverish excitement reached a dramatic climax when he disclosed the fact that he himself was contemplating a first-hand survey of Kesh-makesh, and my happiness was completed when Del Aram and Jameh Zar openly declared their intention of joining the Celestial Caravan moving Earthward. Now activities were in full swing and the headquarters of Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society was daily thronged with so many applicants that we had difficulty in registering their names.

I do not need to tell you that all these developments were wholly unexpected, and I knew that they all came to pass through the graces of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. He had helped me to build better than my most sanguine hope had envisaged. I could now feel confident about the future of my people.

I knew that the need of the Earth was no other than as-

sociation with such visitors. The solitary places shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher shall be given unto it, and the light of the Planet of Love will scatter its darkness. The Earth's inhabitants shall see the effulgence of the angelic realm and the will of the Kingdom of Heaven shall be done!

The weak hands shall be strengthened and the feeble knees confirmed. Those who are now of a fearful heart will be strong, for the Children of the Stars shall abide with them from everlasting to everlasting. Then the eyes of the blind shall see and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as the hart and the tongue of the dumb sing. For in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert, and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitation of the dragons shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the Way of Holiness. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, but the Redeemed Ones of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher shall walk there. And the Ransomed Ones of the Heavenly Stars shall visit the Earth with songs and everlasting joy upon their lips; the Earth's inhabitants shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

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THE ARTISTS OF THE SKY

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Chapter IX

THE ARTISTS OF THE SKY

NOW that the Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society was founded on the Supreme Star, my chief concern was the selection of a few unique and glorious spirits, so that their migration to our globe might yield inestimable results. With this idea in mind, I attended numerous gatherings—social, intellectual, spiritual, aesthetic, musical—searching among the Students from the far-off Stars for the worthiest and most progressive, in the hope of inducing them to return with me to Earth.

The group which I found the most delightful was that of Del Aram. Here the discussions were of a lofty and inspiring tone, while the atmosphere was cheerful and invigorating. For long my attention had been focused on the habitués of this circle, and I had on various occasions brought up the subject of our approaching venture, but although they gave me their attention and sympathy, that was all that they gave, which in my opinion was very little indeed. However, the hour came when they enthusiastically proclaimed themselves desirous of joining the heavenly Caravan, and this I deemed a supreme triumph.

It was at a reunion in the Salon of Del Aram that this stroke of good fortune came to me. She, like a young queen, moved with grace among the genial and happy throng

of guests, which included the most illumined souls of all the Stars. The Spirit of the World's Teacher was with us.

Del Aram had asked Azad-pa, the dancer from the Star Aldebaran and the Celestial Ballet to entertain her friends. I had seen Azad-pa giving her beautiful, etheric dances in the Amphitheatre, but here, on the intimate terrace of Del Aram's studio, she presented such a purity of rhythmic structure, such a richness of spiritual impluse, that as I watched her fairy figure sway and bend, my whole being leapt toward her in ecstatic agreement. I well remembered a conversation which we had had after one of her public performances. She had said:

"I could only believe in a God who knew how to dance. My God is a divine Dancer, and I worship Him whenever I dance."

"Would you visit my Star and teach my people this lesson?" I had asked.

"If you plead long enough, I might take you seriously, but tell me—is your God a dancer too?"

"I have learned from you," I had answered, "that my God also dances, but I fear that the God of many on the Earth is the God of a dull dignity."

"Oh," she had cried, "my God dances, my God plays with me and I play with my God. I cannot conceive of Him without rhythm, without grace, without intelligent expression, without infinite forms of beauty through which to express His infinite rhythmic Being."

"O Azad-pa! Come, I beg of you, come to my world and spread this gospel. We need it, O we need it so much! We need it more than life. We need it more than bread, more than water."

"Then you want a new God for your world—the God of the Dance?" she had asked smiling.

"Yes, yes, a thousand times yes! I want your God—your God of beauty, symmetry, proportion, rhythm and deep, abiding joy. I want the New God of my world to dance and to pour upon the faded, joyless spirits, the exuberance and gaiety of the Stars, for now I know that the Stars are dancing in the heavens for the salvation of the Universe, and now I know that dancing and praying are the same."

I had been thinking over this past conversation with Azad-pa when her solo in the "Dance of the Cosmic Rhythm" came to an end. And now she took her place at the head of her celestial company of dancers, trailing them, a many-colored garland, over the moon-flecked lawn. What infinite beauty! What infinite strength, lightness, intelligence, grace appeared in that dazzling spectacle! Each entity was ordered, harmonious, pulsing with the sap of life, while Azad-pa, at the head of those vast "Cosmic Revels", led them toward the green, sacred altar—there to dance, to worship and to pray.

My soul was set on fire, and catching Del Aram in my arms, I whirled after them, crying out in exultant joy:

"Now there dances a God in me!

"Now I know that the New God of my world will dance!

"Now I know that my Star will witness a New Era—the Era of the Dance!"

Later, when the devotees of the dance had reassembled, breathless and happy, on the terrace of Del Aram's Studio, the Spirit of the World's Teacher addressed them, saying:

"To dance is at once to worship and to pray, for as the Stars dance in the sky, so the gods themselves play and

dance. To dance is to take part in the cosmic control of the Universe. The celebrant dancers, conscious of the glories of their art, will enter into mystic oneness with the Spirit. To dance rhythmically is to gain blissful and perfect experience with the Infinite. Be not of those of whom it might be said, 'We have piped unto you and ye have not danced', for one of the approaches to your Maker is through music, rhythm and the dance.

"My object in bringing you to the Universal University has been to enable you to apprehend through contemplation, motion and ecstacy those truths which are more profound than any which can be reached through logic or cold reason. Your ultimate goal is and ever shall be your spiritual absorbtion in God, and now I declare unto you, O starry sons and daughters of my Father, this great and marvelous truth: Body and soul are alike divine, alike sacred, alike spiritual. The soul grows as a fragrant flower on the body's stem. Material beauty is the true mirror of divine beauty. I beg of you to ever seek this divine beauty, this ineffable harmony, in which all things become as one through the most nearly perfect sensuous forms—music and the dance. You have seen here with your own eyes the Dance of the Spirit, and when you return to your respective globes, teach men—all men—to dance, for when they dance thus, it will be the expression of God within them."

During this talk, I watched the face of Azad-pa. Entranced, she listened, like a glorified being, and when the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had concluded she stepped forward and said:

"No better movement could be started on the planets than a league among the dancers for the exhibition of the various native dances. Herein I believe lies the root of a real

World Unity, World Democracy and World Brotherhood. On the Star Aldebaran, the unification of the people was largely brought about through the portrayal of their national dances. We learned, after much study and experience, that vigorous, vital expression developed mental as well as physical health, and what more vigorous form of expression could be found than the dance? In this way, we went back to the very well-springs of the people's consciousness and gained a clear perception of the principles and impulses from which the great dancing of Aldebaran was evolved. Eventually, the government became interested in fostering our ideals and founded an Academy of the Dance, and thus all the inhabitants were step by step united in a League of Dancers, which has brought about a lasting era of international understanding, mutual recreation and good will."

The idea of a League of Dancers captivated me, and again I begged Azad-pa to join our Earth-bound Caravan, that she might initiate my people in the divine mysteries of the Dance. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher expressed His approval of my suggestion, and to my utter delight, she consented, bowing low before Him and saying:

"O my Lord! I accept Thy mandate, and will accompany the Vagabond to his world. I will teach his people the poetry of the dance and the dance of poetry."

"Ah!" exclaimed Atash-bar, the poet from Jupiter. "You may teach them the poetry of the dance, O my beloved Azad-pa, but how can you teach them the dance of poetry, if you are not a poet yourself?"

Azad-pa knew that Atash-bar was one of the prizes which I coveted for the Caravan, and now that she was converted to the cause herself, like all true converts she wished to

convert others. She looked at me and smiled, telling me without words to observe her tactics, then turning to him she said:

"It is true that I am not a poet, O Atash-bar, though my feet measure to the music of the Stars. But you who are a poet, as the least of us can recognize, tell us—what is poetry?"

Atash-bar scrutinized her face, and finding in it nothing

Poetry is the eldest sister of all the arts, and the parent of most. It is the overflowing of the soul; the morning dream of great minds; the breath of truth dwelling in beauty; the apotheosis of sentiment; the child of enthusiasm; the fountain-head of music; and the domain of dreams"

"Where is the home of poetry?" asked Shahnaz-nour, the songstress from Sirius.

"Poetry is to be found nowhere," answered Atash-bar quickly, "unless we find it within ourselves. The home of truth is in the heart, and truth shines the brighter clad in verse. Poetry is royal apparel in which truth displays its divine origin. The essence of poetry is will and emotion, and the finest poem is the reflection of an experience. The poet learns in silence and suffering what he teaches in song."

"What makes poetry?" Shahnaz-nour inquired again, and it seemed to me that she understood better than any one of us what Atash-bar was trying to convey.

"What makes poetry?" he echoed back the question. "A great heart, brimful of one noble passion. It is then that poetry becomes the music of the soul. It is then that poetry becomes the garden of God-thoughts in blossom. This kind of poetry, coloring intellect with sentiment, will cleanse and

purify the fountain of our aspirations. This kind of poetry, in its dramatic and life-building suggestions, is unlimited and infinite, but it is born only after painful journeys into the vast regions of thought. When the musical dreams of such a poet shape themselves into luminous verse, then the children of the arts dance in the moon-dawn over the lake; in the jewelled loveliness of wistful eyes; in the fearlessness that comes of inward light; in the laughing melody of summer rains molding the rose; in the symphony of corn, and in the mountain stream rushing ever onward, onward toward the sea."

"And what is the mission of poetry?" I asked.

"The mission of poetry," he answered with a sense of finality in his voice, "is to constitute itself the Guardian of the humanities of the Stars, and to sing the Song of Universal Peace and Good-Will into the hearts of the creatures."

"But who will sing this Song of the Universe, this Song of Songs, this Sovereign Song, and who will act as the accompanist?" asked Ahang-zan, the musician, composer and conductor from Mercury.

"Atash-bar will write the Song," I answered. "You will compose the music, and shall yourself accompany Shahnaz-nour as she sings it to the congregation of the humanities, and this Song shall be heard for the first time from the stage of Kesh-makesh!"

"I fully approve of this plan," announced Jameh Zar. "Let Atash-bar write a Poem, round and perfect as a star. Let him compose a Song of Love; an Immortal Song; a Song on the mighty pinions of which every living soul may be lifted to its predestined heaven. Atash-bar *can* render this service to the people of Kesh-makesh, for it is as natural

to him to blossom into metre of amity and peace as it is to a tree to leaf itself in spring."

"Jameh Zar speaks wisely!" Doust Parast interposed. "How often in the Amphitheatre have these great artists entranced us—Atash-bar reciting his matchless Poems, Ahang-zan conducting the Cosmic Orchestra, and Shahnaz-nour flooding the plains of Heaven with her golden voice?

"Let music with its call of awakening descend upon the Earth, for the touch of such artists is light—it plucks the meaning from the strings of life. This music is a rose-lipped shell which murmurs of the eternal sea; a melodious bird singing the songs of another shore; a sublime instinct, and the unfathomable speech which leads us to the edge of the Infinite and lets us for a moment gaze into it."

Then the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher spoke to us:

"If you see deeply enough, you see musically. The heart of nature is created on the basis of the law of music, and there is music in all things. If men only had ears and could listen to the melodies of the marching orbs! If men only had eyes and could see the healing colors of the etheric vibrations of music! Music strikes fire from the heart of the Creator and brings tears to the eyes of His creatures. Music waves her eternal wand, and softens the rocks and bends the knotted oak.

"Music? It is all of the Heaven we have in Heaven. Music is the sacred tongue of God; the speech of the Angels; the companion of our prayer and the daughter of our religion. Teach music to all your children. Ah happy art! Happy children! Happy lovers of music! Let this music, this invisible dance of life, vibrate in the memory of the ages and in the blood of as yet unborn generations."

And then Hakim Hakimian spoke as follows:

"Recently, I have given much of my time to the study of the conditions on Kesh-makesh, and I now repeat my conviction that here lie great possibilities for progress. My enthusiasm has arisen to such a pitch that I have myself decided to visit Kesh-makesh and assist the Vagabond in its intellectual and spiritual rennaissance. For this purpose, we have been recruiting an "Army of Light", a Celestial Caravan, and we feel that those who join us will have the greatest of opportunities to bring into realiaztion the aims of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, finding universal channels for the full and unstinted expression of their talents, and gaining the supreme satisfaction of putting into order the affairs of one of our Father's Mansions."

Then Pasand-bana, the sturdy architect from Betelgeuse, came forward.

"I too will migrate to Kesh-makesh, for I can see in my mind a city of clustered palaces which will become the Capital of that World. My plan has within itself seeds of most captivating possibilities. It rises before me—a Dream City, exquisite in beauty, idyllic in setting, magnificent in architecture—formed of hitherto unknown aspirations and including some unforgetable lines of the past.

"Moral beauty is the basis of all beauty, but this foundation has been more or less veiled by nature. It is for Art to perceive it, to reveal it and to make it tangible, even as the sculptor clears away the superfluous matter from the spiritual image lying in a block of marble; even as the painter, in his vision, paints poetry for those hours when men prefer silence to speech.

"The World Capital on Kesh-makesh will become a center for all international organizations of collateral aims. Here shall be built the Parliament of Man, the Universal Temple

of Religion, the World Court, the World Theatre, the World Convention Hall, the World Stadium and the World Bank. In brief, it will be the World Headquarters of an internationally-minded people. When the site is selected, it will be set aside and dedicated permanently to the service of humanity.

"I hope that we shall build the World Capital on Keshmakesh to the sound of music, and that our very souls will pass into its gleaming towers, pointing silently into the heavens."

Then arose the four great artists of the Stars—Azad-pa the dancer from Aldebaran, Atash-bar, the poet from Jupiter, Shahnaz-nour, the singer from Sirius, and Ahang-zan, the musician from Mercury, and taking their places by the side of Pasand-Bana, they one by one inscribed their names in the Book of the Army of Light.

My cup was overflowing. At last the Earth had its mighty champions in the Valhalla of the Gods and my task, although only begun, was launched under fair and fortunate patronage.

I went out—I wanted to be alone.

Beneath the Celestial Vault, under the silent splendor of the Stars, I knelt and lifted up my heart in prayer—

"Our Father who art in Heaven!

"Hallowed be Thy Name!

"Thy Kingdom come!

"Thy Will be done—on Earth!"

The breezes of the sky were blowing over my face, and I felt the presence of another being. I looked around. Kneeling by my side, Del Aram was praying.

A MARIONETTE IN HIS HAND

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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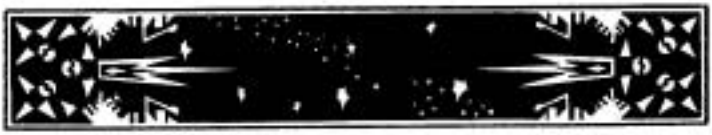

Chapter X

A MARIONETTE IN HIS HAND

AFTER these auspicious events had given me a certain amount of confidence, I suddenly began to feel uncertain about the length of time which was reserved for me on the Supreme Star. So, as a precautionary measure, I hastened to complete the numerous plans which the nature of events had forced upon me.

At the period of my entrance into the Universal University, my sole intention had been to learn as much as my intellectual and spiritual capacity permitted and later to return to Earth with all that I had acquired in the forms of ideas, concepts, theories, and principles of a higher civilization, meaning according to the opportunities of the time and the nature of the place, to put them into practical execution among my fellowmen. I had used every advantage which fortune had placed at my disposal, so that at that moment I could legitimately and pridefully claim that I was quite a remarkable fellow—yes, quite, quite remarkable—fully equipped to cope with the best or with the worst in human-kind, both angelic and demoniac—perhaps the latter more especially.

Circumstances on the Supreme Star had favored me in a most unique manner and the development of the Heaven-

bent-toward-Earth Society had placed in my hands a powerful organ. I was not now to return alone, not to come back with merely a bundle of new ideas and generalities, but was to lead toward the oasis of the Earth a Celestial Caravan of starry spirits, and like the "Hunter of the East", catching these universal soul-rays in a "noose of light" and unleashing them on our world, was to let their very presences put to flight the darkness of ignorance and the gloom of intolerance.

Through long processes of thinking, and dreaming—as a dreamer I worked prodigiously—this had become my plan, my all-absorbing mania.

I had enlisted for the Cause of the Earth the active interest of Del Aram, Jameh Zar, Doust Parast, Hakim Hakimian, Azad-pa, Atash-bar, Shahnaz-nour, Ahang-zan and Pasand-bana. Sar-sar would have added his name to theirs, but it was necessary for him to return to Mars to help to rehabilitate the remnant of the Army of Light. These few volunteers were among the most important souls of the Stars, but there were others, quite talented, quite famous in their own fields, and toward these I now turned covetous eyes.

From childhood I had been a lover of the theatre. At school I took part in dramatic activities, and when I became a young man, I tried my hand at playwriting and scenario-weaving. My friends often fed my conceit by telling me that I had a sense for dramatic values and the conflict of opposites, and others went so far as to insist that I had missed my calling by being a nondescript vagabond instead of an actor. All the while, I could never really find myself, and no one succeeded in anchoring me to one thing. Still, I ever retained a passionate love for the theatre, and

held an exalted opinion concerning its mission and manifest destiny in the final evolution of civilization.

So I carried my weakness for dramatics to the Supreme Star, attended its theatres and conversed frequently with its actors and actresses. I met its playwrights and producers, and recognizing that I believed in their profession and had the greatest esteem for it, they took me in as one of their own and even went so far as to give me small parts in some of their plays. These, however, after a few rehearsals, they invariably asked me to resign for reasons which I never discovered, as they never gave me any.

All these amateurish activities and pretensions gave me an entré to their inner circle, and it was at a supper following an opening night that I had the privilege of meeting Bazi-del of the Star, Altair. Bazi-del was a consummate playwright, a skillful dramatist, a finished actor and a far-visioned producer all rolled into one. My admiration for his versatility and talent was unbounded, and we became great friends. In time, I proposed that he should join the Celestial Caravan and revolutionize the theatrical life of the Earth, by driving the money-changers out of the Temple of Drama and causing it to attain to the highest pinnacle of art and beauty. But he considered me an irresponsible upstart and would not take me seriously.

In spite of this perhaps exaggerated enthusiasm for dramatics, I was far from having a one-track mind. When I was on Earth, I attended churches, mosques, synagogues and temples, and listened to ministers, mullahs, priests, mobids and pundits alike. I found good in all. Then I made pilgrimages to historic shrines, studied ancient and modern art in innumerable galleries and museums; visited civic and federal buildings, with an eye to their architectural novelties;

associated with doctors and physicians of all types—aleopaths, homeopaths, ostheopaths, chiropractors, naturo-paths, and psycho-analysts; attended enthusiastically the stadiums of sport and athletics; consorted with government officials; followed the activities of the representatives of my humanity assembled in parliament battling for the rights of their constituents, and hobnobbed with artists, aesthetes, cranks, atheists, agnostics, psychologists and philosophers. Each one taught me something. I always kept an open mind and an open hand, and while my mind was filled to overflowing with contradictory theories, my hand returned to me empty.

The scientist instructed me on the tremendous power stored in atomic energy; the religionist revealed to me the exclusive salvation which I could achieve by believing in his creed; the Christian Scientist spoke to me on Divine Mind and miraculous healing; the numeralogist descanted on the spiritual values in every letter of my name; the New Thoughter described the advantages which could be obtained through affirmation; the astrologer prophesied great things for my future by reading my horoscope, and the medium materialized before my eyes the spirits of my ancestors.

These confusing and distracting pursuits did not in the least disturb me, but rather prepared me for my entrance into the Universal University. Through them all I had come to believe in the magical potency of one word—*improvement*. We must *improve* ourselves continually, otherwise we will vegetate and go to seed; even the Devil has to improve himself and his methods, else he will be forgotten. Consequently, when I arrived on the Supreme Star, I was looking everywhere for teachers and for ideas to benefit myself and those on Earth.

After much searching, I picked out a group of souls whose co-operation I considered of essential importance to my work.

These were Jahan-nama, a painter from Uranus; Tasveer-kash, a sculptor from Neptune; Rouh-afza, an aesthete from Antares; Sehhat-deh, a physician from Arcturus; Zour-afshan, an athlete from Canopus; Darbar-adli, a statesman from Vega and Elm-parvaz, a psychologist from Capella.

I had chosen unquestionably some of the brightest intellectual and spiritual stars of the Universal University, and I prayed that some way be opened so that they also might become members of the Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Caravan.

Therefore I requested the opportunity of pleading my cause before the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher.

The interview was granted, and He listened attentively to the outline of my plan.

"What," He cried, "you have already secured several of my finest pupils, and you are not satisfied?

"My Lord," I boldly answered, "I am never satisfied."

"But the Heavens would become empty," He objected smiling.

"My Master," I replied, "as long as the Heavens are filled with your radiant presence, they will never be empty."

He mused a second: "I will talk with them, but I will not promise you success."

"My Lord of Success! Your intercession in my behalf will be success. My people need these teachers. They need them very badly."

"But their own Stars need them too."

"We need them more than they do, for the time has come for my world to become a New World."

"I like your courage, your enthusiasm and your irrepres-

sible optimism," the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher said, "and I will do my best for your cause." And then He kissed me on both cheeks, and I departed with a new feeling of assurance.

The way in which the Heavenly Father helped me to perform this last service was in itself a miracle, and it all came about in the following manner:

The President of the Republic of the Supreme Star Faravan-Taher, had been but recently elected by the votes of the people, and inasmuch as the Students of the Universal University had taken an active part in the general campaign in order to learn the methods and policies of its democracy, they were all invited to attend the Inaugural Ball.

The Universal University was situated on the outskirts of the Capital but the Presidential Palace "Mohabbat-Abad" was built in the very center of the city itself. Here it stood, its lofty turrets and cupolas gleaming white against the sky, while emerald lawns, delightfully dotted with blue lakes, spread themselves complacently around it.

The vastly proportioned ballroom was a scene of magnificent splendor. Faravan-Taher and his wife Afsarshad, received the guests who had come from all parts of the Supreme Star and who included the entire body of the Students dressed in their native costumes. I could see no uniformed and decorated ambassadors and diplomats, because there were no "foreign" nations on the Supreme Star. I was told that ages and ages ago there had been a class of men who were supposed to hide their thoughts, to extol the virtues of their own countries and propogate lies about others. But this species had long since become extinct.

An elaborate and inspiring program had been prepared, and when the guests were assembled, Ahang-zan struck up the opening bars of the anthem of the Supreme Star. Everyone stood in silence. Then Atash-bar recited a poem conveying in eloquent terms the confidence which the people felt in their new president; Shahnaz-nour sang some inimitable songs of love and faith, collected from the poets of other globes; Bazi-del presented a miniature pageant of the humanities of the worlds, and Azad-pa, appearing like a lyric melody, portrayed "The Birth of Youth", "The Love of the Moth for the Candle," and "The Awakening of Beauty."

After the final curtain, Jameh-Zar drew Del Aram toward the dais on which Faravan-Taher and Afshar-shad were seated. The President arose, and as the people fell to sudden stillness, he addressed them:

"God is Beautiful, and He create man in His own image and likeness.

"There is no higher religion than the religion of Beauty.

"To give happiness is the true empire of Beauty.

"Loveliness and kindliness are the two eyes of Beauty.

"Therefore Del Aram, as my first official act, I name you 'Queen of Heaven' and invest you with this jewelled crown in token of eternal gratitude."

Then he advanced toward the most beautiful woman of the Stars and placed upon her bowed head a white chaplet of diamonds. While he was speaking, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had quietly entered the ballroom, and He stood for awhile unnoticed, watching the gracious scene. When the tumultuous applause which followed the crowning of Del Aram had subsided, He came forward and stood, erect and silent. The people were bathed in the sunshine of

His presence. Oh, how they loved Him! They were willing to obey Him because He exacted no obedience; they were glad to be His slaves because He gave them their unconditioned freedom! At any moment they would have sacrificed their lives for Him because He demanded no sacrifice. He stood, looking at them with tender solicitude, and feeling that He desired to speak, a shower of silence descended upon them. Then He addressed them as follows:

"Have faith in yourselves, for you are born to conquer. Blend your lives with the source of Eternal Good. Do your own thinking and dreaming. Discover the Truth within yourselves. Behind the visible eye there is an invisible Eye; back of the material ear there is a spiritual Ear; beyond the sensible mind there is a super-sensible Mind. Therefore, my children of the sky, I admonish you to see with the Eye of the eye, to hear with the Ear of the ear and to understand with the Mind of the mind. Gain tranquility of body, perception of reason and evenness of spirit. Shed your light like a candle set in a windless spot. When a candle is placed in a sheltered niche, how steadily it burns! Your shelter is the cave of your own soul. Abide in it, and while abiding, learn to control your inner forces, so that you may live in harmony with the Law of the Universe—Rhythm. Live and teach others to live rhythmically. Breathe in rhythm; talk in rhythm; walk in rhythm; dream in rhythm; dance in rhythm, and love in rhythm. Once your soul has become the home of rhythm, you will be able to be cheerful when it is difficult to be cheerful; patient when it is difficult to be patient. You wll be able to push on when you wish to stand still; keep silent when you wish to talk and be agreeable when you wish to be disagreeable.

"With these lessons, I come before you to announce my decision regarding the future. I have lived among you for a long time, and have grown to love you with an exceeding love, but now the hour has struck for me to depart."

To depart! This was a shaft out of the blue sky! The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher to depart! Where? To leave the Supreme Star! What? To abandon them! Why? Only God knows how those people felt! I never could describe the tremendous drama of that simple announcement. The ballroom was a vast hubbub of murmuring surprise and painful exclamation. Then the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher continued:

"My beloved sons and daughters of the sky!

"The children of another Star need me, are calling to me, and wherever there is a need, a call, there you will find me. I intend to lead a Caravan of my chosen disciples to another planet, in order to teach its inhabitants the lessons that you have already learned and to establish in their midst the Will of My Father."

He paused. He felt the effect of His words on His people and was sad. Then He looked into my face and gave me a strange, enigmatic smile. Greatest of all heavens! Did I understand rightly the meaning of that smile? Did it say that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was to assume the leadership of the Caravan? Was I crazy? Was I dreaming? Was I in my right senses? Where was I? My whole body was one living flame of fire! Had the cause of the Earth loomed so large at the Court of Heaven? Or was there another Caravan set in motion toward another Star? Oh God! Oh God! Those few seconds of uncertainty almost killed me. What could I do? How would I know?

Then my eyes wandered over the sea of dumb-struck faces and fell upon the radiant countenance of Del Aram. In a flash of lightning I was certain. A flood of emotion swept over me and I was weeping, weeping.

"Yes," He once more raised His voice, "I have decided to visit Kesh-makesh. The First Regiment of the Army of Light is already formed under my command. It consists of eighteen soldiers, and each soldier under his own leadership will form another regiment of eighteen, each regiment, including its leader being a "Word of Unity". And now I am going to call on those whom I have already chosen, to pass before Faravan-Taher and Afshar-shad, so that you may have the opportunity of bestowing your approbation upon them—the pioneers of a new civilization."

By this time, the excitement of the throng of guests had reached the highest pitch and the atmosphere of the ballroom was surcharged with an intense electric spirit. Wonder, astonishment, awe, amazement were writ large on every face. Many had but heard the name Kesh-makesh, the larger number was unaware of its existence, and now, without a word of warning, it was presented to them as the future abode of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. By this time, I had recovered from my cataclyic shock and my eyes swept over the people—the thousands of faces struck by the lightning of Heaven. Then they all began to ask questions: "Kesh-makesh?" "Where is it?" "We have never heard of it before!" "What kind of a Star is it?" "Is it inhabited?" "Has it any civilization?" "What is its greatness, that our beloved Teacher has selected it for His future home?" "How fortunate are His chosen ones!" "Where is His Army of Light?" "Let us see them!" "Quiet! Here He speaks again."

I heard the voice of the Celestial Teacher:

1. "The Vagabond of Eternity from Kesh-makesh."

I dimly remember that I walked toward the dias, bowed low before the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, Faravan-Taher and Afsar-shad, and returned to my place. I was conscious of thousands of eyes focussed upon me, and I did not feel comfortable.

Then the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher called the following names, mentioning the globe from which each one had come, and they all went through the same ceremony:

2. Del Aram from Venus
3. Jameh Zar from Cygnus
4. Doust Parast from Alpha Centauri
5. Hakim Hakimian from Saturn
6. Azad-pa from Aldebaran
7. Atash-bar from Jupiter
8. Shahnaz-nour from Sirius
9. Ahang-zan from Mercury
10. Bazi-del from Altair
11. Jahan-nama from Uranus
12. Tasveer-kash from Neptune
13. Pasand-bana from Betelgeuse
14. Rouh-afza from Antares
15. Sehhat-deh from Arcturus
16. Zour-afshan from Canopus
17. Darbar-adli from Vega
18. Elm-parvaz from Capella

My dream had come to pass. But as I came to think of it, was it after all *my* dream? I did not have to lead the Celestial Caravan through the depths of space, but had I been destined to do so?

As I came to think of it, yes as I came to think of it, I was only a marionette, a chequer-piece in the Hand of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and He had used me to play His game. He had moved me hither and thither as He saw fit, as the rules of the game dictated, and all the time I had been thinking that I was a free man—no man had ever boasted of freedom as much as I—that I was quite a remarkable fellow, a man of many parts, a clever tactician; that I was an advocate of the cause of Humanity at the Court of Heaven, that I influenced even the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, that I had won Him to my cause through the force of my eloquence, my courage and my optimism and all that sort of childishness.

But, through it all, He had known that He would visit the Earth with His Army of Light. He had made His decision before the foundation of the Universe. Yet had He been kind and mericful to me and had dealt with me so gently that I had almost come to believe that I was as good as He, that I was the center of Immensity and the conflux of Eternity. I had made quite a noise in the Heavens, and I had patted myself on the back, and had walked straight toward my face in the mirror, smiling at it pleasantly, and gleefully rubbing my hands against each other—quite satisfied, yes, delightfully satisfied with myself—and had often waited for hours around the heavenly corners and back-alleys of the Supreme Star to receive a smile, a word of flattery or a compliment from some passing Angel to feed the insatiable hunger of my egotism!

I was disgusted, utterly disgusted with myself and with all that I had been doing and with all the thoughts that I had been harboring in my petty, shrivelled brain. Fool that I was! I was a nobody, a marionette, a chequer-piece! That's

all! And my pride? Where was my pride? Where was my self-respect? Where was my self-assurance? I was lower than the dust! Come, friends, trample on me! Laugh me to scorn! Despise me! Disown me. You have the right.

Yes, a marionette! A chequer-piece! A slave!

But as I come to think of it again, I would rather be a marionette in His Hand than the absolute autocrat of the Earth!

I would rather be a piece on His chequer-board than the most mighty general of the worlds' armies.

I would rather be a slave at His court than a king upon a throne!

Yes, I would; I tell you, I would! I adjure you to believe me, I would!

A marionette!

A chequer-piece!

A slave!

In His Hand!

On His chequer-board!

At His court!

That's all!

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

THE VAGABONDS

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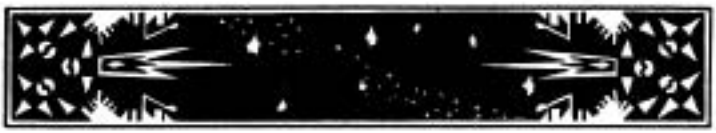

Chapter XI

THE VAGABONDS

THE word had gone abroad.

It was flashed to the ends of the Supreme Star—

"The Spirit of the World's Teacher has selected another planet for His abode."

And suddenly the Earth became the most absorbing topic of discussion in Heaven.

The library of the Earth was thronged with eager and bewildered inquirers and its reading-rooms were crowded.

The Observatory was kept open day and night, and thousands of eyes peered down at the Earth through the gigantic telescopes; the science of astrophysics helping to solve many problems and detecting the mistakes of the former star-gazers.

The headquarters of Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society was besieged with numerous applicants, and branches had to be opened for the registration of names.

And then the first alarum was sounded by those in authority—if these conditions became more widespread, the Heavens would be deserted and an end would come to the supremacy of the Supreme Star; yet no one could find a way or suggest a method of stopping the overwhelming rush of the humanities of the skies toward the Earth.

The call resounded through the valleys and hills of the Universe—

"The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher has chosen the Earth for the scene of His cosmic activities!"

That was enough! Great God! That was more than enough!

The unfoldment of the civilization of the Supreme Star and the march of its unequalled progress was only a parallel to that which was about to transpire upon the Earth, because it had been proven by all its historians that the startling development in every phase of its activities had begun with the arrival of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and the inauguration of the Universal University.

Before His coming, there had been poverty, ignorance, division and war, political rivalries, spiritual prejudices and a multiplicity of languages. Now all these unfortunate conditions were forgotten. Peace reigned; union and amity rested in the hearts of the happy population; prosperity and knowledge overflowed the homes and the minds; there was only one religion—the Religion of Love; one God—the God of Beauty. The political parties were confederated in fostering those policies which advanced the interests of all the people; neighbor loved neighbor, and tolerance and freedom of ideas were the elementary rules of their association with each other. Besides it was an interesting fact that all spoke one language and communicated their thoughts in one writing.

And so, had I the time, I could have perched on the edge of a wandering cloud and mused over the changes which were in store for the Earth as the definite and uncontrovertible result of the early migration of the

Spirit of the World's Teacher. But I had not the time, for I was actually engaged in the formation of my Regiment of Light.

Just as the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was Commander of the First Regiment of the Army, which was called the "Word of Unity" and which consisted of eighteen soldiers or "Eighteen Letters of the Living," similarly every one of these was called upon to form another regiment or another "Word of Unity." In this manner, each one of the original eighteen was the commander of another eighteen and in turn, each one of the second eighteen, had to recruit his own regiment of eighteen, and so forth in an endless chain. This plan, which had been formulated by that master-mind of organization, Hakim Hakimian, caused much happy and creative rivalry, for each commander was allowed entire freedom in the selection of his soldiers, a freedom which gave him the opportunity of enrolling those who were in sympathy with his own intellectual and artistic aspirations.

My own experience almost brought about the disruption of Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society and caused much furore and excitement in all the heavenly circles. When my turn had come to organize a regiment of eighteen, in accordance with the unconscious dictates of my own life—vagabondage and irresponsibility—I selected my soldiers from among the representatives of the Various Wandering Stars. The trouble started when at our very first meeting, one of them, with a perverted sense of the humorous, suggested the idea of their naming themselves the "Vagabonds." I resisted this suggestion as far as was consistent with my position and dignity, but to a man they

clamored so vociferously that I had to yield, desiring to please them at that first coming-together.

And so they went forth and heralded themselves throughout the length and breadth of the Supreme Star as the "Vagabond Band of the Wandering Planets." They were rather unruly and hard to manage and did things of which quite a large element of the stellar community did not approve. Just because they came from the Run-away Stars and because they belonged to a regiment the commander of which was a vagabond, they took it into their heads that they could commit murder and get away with it, and of course, being a vagabond myself, with the blood of wanderlust and adventure seething in my body, I sympathized with my band of soldiers and treated them with a tolerance and clemency seldom found in a strictly military camp.

Now this leniency on my part was taken advantage of, and soon they became utterly spoiled. They carried their spiritual maraudings into all the highways and byways of the Supreme Star and the echoes of their celestial pranks, eccentricities and whimsicalities resounded throughout the hall of the Heavens, occasioning no end of merriment and jocularity. They became known as wild gypsies, troubadours, minstrels, happy-go-lucky madcaps of the Stars, and no power in the sky could restrain their exuberant caprices.

Jameh Zar did not so much as notice them; Doust Parast stood aside and watched them with indulgence; but Del Aram enthusiastically took part in their heavenly orgies and saturnalian convivialities. I did not mind the dissatisfaction of the fogies and fundamentalists, but when finally one of my own colleagues called my regiment

"Les Mauvais Sujects" of the Supreme Star and the "Scourges" of the Planet of Love, intimating that unless I toned down their jaunty and debonaire spirit our Celestial Caravan would go to wreck, I thought that it was high time to do something and to do it immediately. The only way by which I could curb their sportiveness was to threaten to disband the entire regiment and to form another from among the Students of the well-behaved Stars. I disliked to intimate a thing which I did not intend to put into practice, but I thought myself that they were going too far.

The influence of this threat lasted for only a few days, and then they broke out worse than before. The fact of the matter was that the majority of the people adored them and encouraged their nondescript frivolities with the sound of their laughter and the cries of their encores.

They must have done something terrible—I could never find out what—but at last they aroused the ire of Jameh Zar, who brought a catalogue of complaints against them to our Beloved Teacher. I was present at the interview, in an agony of apprehension.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher looked at me and smiled, and then turning to Jameh Zar, He said:

"Let them be! They do you no harm. It would be a pity to disband them. They are the joy-creators of the Heavens. They make you laugh. They make you sing. The make you dance. What else do you want? You say that they have no regular profession and that they waste away their time, but they are vagabonds like their master. Like attracts like. What else do you expect from a band of mad-eyed gypsies and starry rogues?

And after all, is it necessary for every one to have a dignified profession? Look at some of my officers! They are so absorbed in the details of their duties and in the manifold rules of their military organization that they have forgotten the art of laughter and the Soul of Love. Look at yourself, Jameh Zar! Smooth those wrinkles from your brow! Free yourself from the burden of wisdom and mystery, and become as a child! These freebooters of the skies are the heralds of my Kingdom of Happiness; they blow through their trumpets and the dead are awakened! They are the breezes of my garden of felicity; they waft over the grief-stricken bodies and they are refreshed! What else do you want? Again I ask, what else do you desire? They have no occupation? They have! One of the greatest. To wake you up, to thrill you with their clarion-call, to come to your assistance when you are in the very jaws of defeat, to give you the glad-tidings of Freedom, and to electrify you with their message of Joy, Joy! This is their occupation! A most laughter-provoking, courage-creating one—more important than any other that I know in the Heavens!"

I breathed a sigh of relief, and Jameh Zar, metaphorically speaking, was annihilated, but he took his medicine bravely. Together we left the presence of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and Jameh Zar, in his great heartedness, turned his steps in the direction of the Camp of the Vagabonds, intent on amending the past. I warned him not to let them learn of what had just taken place, for were he to do so everything on the Supreme Star would be smashed to pieces. Then I hastened to Gor-

Gor, the Vice-President of the Universal University to inform him that the small cloud had drifted away and that the status of my regiment was to remain as before. Gor-Gor laughed in high good humor, for he was among those who did not take the antics of my Vagabonds very seriously.

The Vice-President took entire charge of the administrative affairs of the Universal University. He was the most reliable man in the Heavens, and although seldom seen, his dynamic personality was felt in every branch of the University's activities as well as in all those of the Supreme Star. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher distinguished him with every mark of confidence, and he was universally known as the Master Efficiency of the Stars—the Greyhound of the Heavens.

From morning till late in the evening, he sat in his office, surrounded by a corps of trained assistants, and every hour of his time was given to interviews with the heads of the various departments. Whenever and wherever things went wrong, all would run to Gor-Gor, and with a smoothness and patience which came from experience and infinite understanding, he would right them in the speediest manner. This marvelous spectacle of omnipotence captivated my fancy, and I could well understand why he was named the Master-Efficiency of the Stars and the Engineer of Human Affairs. He had received these well-deserved titles on account of his noiseless management of the complicated problems of the Supreme Star in the early stages of its civilization and he was the one best informed concerning the world-shaking war which the Powers of Darkness had waged against the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and His Army of Light.

I had fervently hoped to bring this vizard with me to the Earth, but our Beloved Master had planned otherwise.

From time immemorial, on the eve of graduation, it had been the custom of the Universal University to send the Students on an excursion into the Regions of Darkness. On the successive Stars where the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had established His abode, these Forces, retiring to the point farthest removed from the Divine Radiance, had held their gloomy functions undisturbed until such periods when they were revealed in all their frightfulness before the matured eyes of the Students.

An important mission entrusted to Gor-Gor by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was to lead the starry Students on this journey to the City of Pandemonium, the capital of the Kingdom of Erebus.

Shortly after my arrival on the Supreme Star, I had been invited to a debate on the principle of Divine Civilization versus Human Civilization or as we called it upon the earth, Religion versus Science, and in the course of discussion, one of the speakers had referred to the City of Pandemonium, in the Kingdom of Erebus, asserting that a positive Evil Influence emanated from it. I contended that such a thing did not exist, for from childhood I had been taught that Evil was the absence of Good, ignorance the absence of knowledge, poverty the absence of wealth, illness the absence of health, and that these negative qualities had no independent existence. In time I had become a thorough believer in this creed of irrepressible optimism and was so convinced of its soundness that I became intolerant and lost my temper with all those

who dared to disagree with me. Such doubters were in my estimation "heretics", and if I had had my way, I would have excommunicated them from human society.

After the heated debate, I made the utmost effort to discover the whereabouts of the City of Pandemonium but no one could give me definite information concerning it. Many, it is true, had heard rumors about the existence of such a Dark Kingdom on the Supreme Star, but not a soul had the vaguest idea of its location. The subject was surrounded with a cloak of mystery. It seemed a myth, a legend handed down from prehistoric ages, yet it persisted and would crop up in unexpected ways poisoning the fountain of our bliss. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher never referred to it in His public or private talks and Hakim Hakimian, the esteemed inter-stellar geographer and historian, was mute concerning it until the day when I went to him in desperation and asked him point blank:

"Where is the Pandemonium City and how about this Kingdom of Erebus?"

"I do not know," he answered bruskly.

"But I thought that there were no demons on the Supreme Star?"

"It was a good thought, a very pious wish."

"I have been told that on the Planet of Love there is no Hate, and only an Almighty Benevolence."

"That is a shallow belief, but I know why you lean on it—you are a Vagabond, and although you wear the face of a lion, I can see in you the heart of a rabbit."

"I have not the heart of a rabbit," I cried in rage, "and do not dare to say so even though you are Hakim Hakimian!"

"Very well, I would not offend you, but let me tell you one thing, my son, and let me tell it to you with all the conviction of my soul: Evil exists; Evil is lurking behind every ambush to attack and destroy the Powers of Good and Beauty. Evil is the greatest danger to the spirituality of the humanities of the Stars."

"Please, Hakim Hakimian," I cried in despair, "you are killing me, you are undermining the foundation of my belief in the Power of Good and its absolute, all-pervading influence. I would rather die than believe that what you say is the truth."

"Then die!" he thundered at me savagely. "The heavenly University does not need a faint-hearted Student! It is better to die a thousand times than to maintain that Evil does not exist."

"But is not Evil the absence of Good," I brought in my metaphysical axioms, "Darkness the absence of Light, hunger the absence of satiety?"

"No," he rejoined, "most positively no! Evil is an actual cancer eating into the heart of Good; Darkness is a concrete energy fighting against the Power of Light; hunger is a force which if uncontrolled will bring death. Go and tell a hungry man that his hunger is an illusion, and see whether he will not laugh you to scorn. You, a Soldier of Light, you, a Knight of Truth! Bah!"

I could bear his taunts no longer, but threw myself upon the ground, weeping.

"Get up man!" he assisted me to my feet. "Wake up! Reason! Reflect! If Darkness does not exist, why this Army of Light? Whom are you going to oppose? Against what Powers?—Shadows? Non-beings? Are you going to fight against yourselves? Vagabonds! Stand

up! Listen to me for your own benefit and for the benefit of others. Evil does exist. It is playing havoc all over God's creation. Your negation of it does not change the situation in the least. It is here, it is there, it is everywhere—mighty and dangerous. It is ready to scatter darkness over the horizon of your heart. It is ready to crush your bones to a thousand pieces. It is ready to defeat the Army of Light, here as well as on the planet Mars!"

I groaned.

"Yes, groan," he pitied me, "what good does it do? Arise, child, open your eyes and see! Evil is the Enemy of Heaven, which you must challenge to destroy."

"How?" I asked before I knew it.

"By affirming that it *exists* and by facing it with courage. Gird up the loins of endeavor! You are the Soldier of Light! The only way to defeat the Prince of Darkness is to fight against him unceasingly. On all the Stars, on all the Planets, Warfare must go on—it must go on—there is no other way—Warfare must go on in full swing, until he and his crew are brought face to face with an unconditional surrender."

"But does not Light drive away Darkness, Good substitute Evil and Love paralyze Hate?" I was intent on defending my theory.

"Yes." To my surprise he agreed with me for the first time. "Yes, Love paralyzes Hate, but what kind of Love?"

"Tell me, what kind of Love?"

"Active Love. The Almighty Power of Love exists in the Universe and we must learn to attract it toward the planet on which we live, making use of it and letting it use us

for its own purpose. Then Good shall prevail over Evil, and we shall become the active instruments through which God shall make manifest the Good Forces. The Good Forces cannot play their parts without our active cooperation. If they remain unused through our passivity they are the same as if they did not exist."

I was loath to admit my defeat, yet I appreciated the logic of his argument, and sadly I said:

"If all this is true, then I must construct a new philosophy of life."

"By all means," he encouraged me, "and the sooner the better, for you will need it, you will need it more than anything else. Despair, negation of evil and maudlin sentimentality lead you nowhere. Only by direct action, by direct pugnacious perseverance, by direct, open and uncompromising warfare can Evil be overcome!"

"My God," I moaned, "and all my life I have taught non-resistance, non-interference, conciliation, forgiveness."

"And where did all this take you? What good did it bring you? Everybody trampled on you. You gave opportunities to the Evil Powers to combine and defame you; to unite and murder your character; to get together and plan your disgrace and your dishonor."

"But they did not succeed! They did not succeed!"

"In what way do you mean that they did not succeed? They would have succeeded if the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had not protected you. In the case of others they have succeeded, and with their devilish weapons are maiming the lives of thousands and hundreds of thousands of innocent people."

Brought face to face with the reality of the situation, I cried out:

"But Hakim Hakimian! What am I to do? How am I to help in the defeat of God's antagonists?"

"Never enter the arena half-heartedly. Never allow your conviction of victory to be clouded by a single doubt."

"And the weapons with which to fight the enemy—what are they?" My whole being was thrilling with the fire of a new enthusiasm.

"Active Love!"

"Active Faith!"

"Active Knowledge!"

I left Hakim Hakimian converted.

The tocsin was sounding in my blood.

I heard the war-cry in my soul.

I listened to the beat of the drum and the tramping of feet.

The flag was unfurled on the battlefield of my spirit.

I was ready for action!

And I declared War, War, War on the Malignant Forces of the Universe!

Sauve qui peut!

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

THE COUNCIL OF WAR

കേരള സാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി

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Chapter XII

THE COUNCIL OF WAR

IT was on the eve of our departure for the Kingdom of Erebus and the Pandemonium City.

The Amphitheatre was filled with the whole body of inter-stellar Students.

Gor-Gor, the leader of the party, sat beside our Celestial Teacher.

The air was tense.

None of us knew what lay ahead.

To a certain extent, I felt calm and master of my fate. I was the stronger for my talk with Hakim Hakimian. As I look back on it now, it made a vast difference.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher arose, and advancing to the edge of the platform, He addressed us with a solemnity that I had seldom seen in Him:

"Beloved Students of my Father's School! You must make yourselves like polished mirrors which capture the rays of the sun. Keep these mirrors pure! Let them not be dimmed by the dust of envy, jealousy, fear, egotism, vanity and conceit. To shut your eyes to the fact that Evil exists is to assist Evil. To remain passive and not to fight it with all the forces of your souls means to separate yourselves from the Supreme Spirit in which you live, dwell and have your being.

Song of the Caravan

"The Kingdom of God is Peace and Love and it is *within you.*

"The Kingdom of Satan is War and Hate and it is *without you.*

"It is only with the eyes of your souls that you can detect the insidious danger threatening the spirituality of my children. I advise you to form a Universal Soul Union and to march on this danger. In the forming of this Union, your valour and firmness will be tested, and that is why I am sending you under the leadership of Gor-Gor and the generalship of Hakim Hakimian to visit the Kingdom of Erebus and to explore the Palaces of the City of Pandemonium.

"I will remain here, and in case of need will come to your assistance.

"I am at your service.

"God is at your service.

"The Universe is at your service.

"The Benevolent Influences of the Garden of Reality are at your service.

"Give courage unto the Lord!

"This is your test.

"This is your great opportunity.

"Go forth to conquer!"

He made a sign with His hand, and countless attendants appeared among us, each Student receiving from them Shining Armour, a Talisman of the Secret Names and a vial of Radiant Liqueure.

"Never separate yourselves," He told us, "from these spiritual objects. They will protect you in the face of danger. But, at the moment of supreme need, repeat nine times the Most Great Name, and immediate relief will be vouchsafed.

"And now farewell! May the all-conquering Spirit of my Father follow you on every step of your momentous journey."

* * *

While the preparations for our departure were under way, I called my Vagabonds to a council of war. Del Aram was also present, for to a large extent she had associated herself with all the drolleries of my Regiment.

It appeared to me that every one of consequence had been entrusted with some sort of commission in connection with the forthcoming expedition, only we had been overlooked, or perhaps forgotten, in the confusion which always attends such gigantic undertakings, even on the Supreme Star.

After we were all gathered in one of the back alleys of Heaven, I made known to them our humiliating situation.

"What are you going to do about it?" inquired the ringleader of the Band.

"I do not know. What do you suggest?" I asked.

"We must do something quite definite," said one of them.

"I agree with you," declared Del Aram.

"Hurry up with your ideas, otherwise we will miss the airships!" chimed in an impatient one.

"I know what to do!" Del Aram jumped up.

"Tell us! Tell us! We will do anything you say!" they all cried aloud.

"You have been called a band of 'Heavenly Rascals'!" Del Aram explained.

"Yes, and worse than that!" several angry Vagabonds rejoined.

"Starry Mischief-makers!"
"Spiritual Rogues!"
"Audacious and irreverent Badmen of the Supreme Star!"
"Celestial Incendiaries!"
"Anarchists of the Skies!"
"Vandals!"
"Knaves!"
"Terrorists!"
"Firebrands!"
"Desperadoes!"
"Rattlesnakes of Eden!"
"Hooligans of the Planet of Love!"
"Marlpots!"
"Scallywags!"

The Vagabonds were up in arms! The cup of their patience had overflowed and they were bent on vengeance.

"Yes, those good-for-nothing Angels have called you by these names, and you have stood their insults all this time." Del Aram addressed them with fiery eyes.

"Who are they anyhow to insult us?"

"They are a lot of psalm-singing, nectar-drinking, harp-playing non-entities!" Del Aram characterized them.

"Friends! Time is short. Let us come to the point. Del Aram has told us that she has a suggestion. Let us listen to her," I said, wishing that I had never started this.

"I know what to do," Del Aram said again.

"Please tell us your idea and don't digress!" I tried to be a severe chairman.

"You raised Hell in Heaven."

"You bet we did, you bet we did!" laughed several Vagabonds.

"All right. Do the reverse of it in Hell!" cried Del Aram.

"Do what?" I asked her.

"Do the reverse of it in Hell!" She was bursting with laughter and mischief.

"Del Aram! Please be serious and tell us just what you mean," I reproved her.

"Don't you see? Don't you understand? You raised Hell in Heaven!"

"If I remember rightly, you have said that already, and it appears that the Vagabonds agree that they have acted in this disgraceful manner, but what about your new idea?"

"I have given you my new idea."

"You have given us your new idea?"

"Yes. *Raise Heaven in Hell!*"

"Raise Heaven in Hell? Raise Heaven in Hell!" The Vagabonds repeated the idea over and over again, and it seemed that it caught their fancy and that they were already eager for the new adventure. It set on fire the imagination of a few, and they rushed toward her, took her hands and danced round and round, crying, singing, shouting:

"We will raise Heaven in Hell!"

"We will lift up the fallen Angels!"

"We will extinguish the infernal fire!"

"We will plant gardens and trees!"

"Hurray! Hurray! Hurray!"

"We will ask the nightingales to sing!"

"We will make the sinners saints!"

"We will wash the unclean spirits!"

"We will make Hell the envy of Heaven!"

Those who had been quiet during this exhibition of missionary enthusiasm started to object:

"You can't do all this."

"The Devil is too clever to be trapped in such a way."
"No water can extinguish the fire of Hell."
"Hell is Hell and you can't raise Heaven in it!"
"Why waste time?"
"This is all a dream!"

When quiet was restored, one of them, who had been silently observing this wild fermentation, came forward and said:

"Vagabonds! Let us not forget one thing and it is this: We are not after all under the leadership of Del Aram. We admire and love her, but we shall take orders only from our beloved leader. He it is who must decide on every important matter." And he bowed before me—the rascal did not mean it in the least—and very ceremoniously addressed himself to me:

"Lord and master! Tell us what we should do. We will not lift one finger without your consent. Decide the matter for us—May we raise Heaven in Hell?"

Of course, all this was most ridiculous, and I wished to box his ears, but I liked the feeling of being referred to as 'lord and master.' Who wouldn't? So I paused and reflected for a few minutes, and placing my fingers on my forehead, appeared lost in deep thought.

Knowing from past experience that the Vagabonds, having once decided to do a thing, would go ahead and do it, with or without permission, I concluded that it would be the better part of wisdom to fall into line with their whimsicalities, give them my blessing and at the same time not forego the exercising of my authority. So I got up, for they were all waiting to hear my decision on the subject, and slowly weighing every word, I said:

"Well, my starry scamps, go ahead and save all the fallen

and semi-fallen angels. See whether you cannot change the cloven hoofs and horns and tails into something more artistic and becoming.

"If you do these things, I feel that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher will be pleased with you. But do not forget that Del Aram has in the past been the inspiration of all your activities, and I am sure that she will continue to lend you the charm of her presence and the resources of her versatile mind. Act toward her as valiant knights. Stand always ready to protect her, and try to impress Hell's crew with the important fact that even there you are every inch the Aristocrat-Vagabonds of the Skies!"

And they all knelt before Del Aram and gave a solemn pledge that they would rise to the highest pinnacle of earnest endeavor, suffer the caves and the winding stairs of Hell to echo and re-echo with the sound of their good deeds, transform the Kingdom of Erebus into the Paradise of the Glorious Lord, raze to the ground the Palaces of the City of Pandemonium, constructing in their places the Mansions of Universal Harmony, and establish the Eternal Dominion of God on the throne of Satan!"

Notwithstanding all these high-sounding pledges, I did not know exactly by what method and in what manner and with what power they could accomplish these miraculous feats. However, I urged them to hurry to the scene of departure for the Kingdom of Erebus, and watched them as they scampered out of sight headed by Del Aram. Then I dismissed the matter from my mind, and withdrawing myself to the "high places" for just a moment, I let my mind wander back to happy days and nights on the Mountain of Light.

It was here that for the first time, Del Aram had dis-

carded the cloak of aloofness with which she had always surrounded herself, and here she had let me talk to her of my love, of the flowers and birds and of the moonbeams on Earth. Here also I had recited to her many of our famous love-tales—Romeo and Juliet, Abelard and Heloise, Paolo and Francesca, Laila and Majnun. She had listened with rapt attention to these stories of another Star, and they must have struck a responsive chord in her heart, for on several occasions she had wept, and then had asked me to repeat them over again.

Never, never in all my life had I been so happy, so carefree, so full of vagabond spirit as in those spring days with Del Aram on the Mountain of Light. Here, carried on the wings of inspiration, and fired with love, I had written her a letter every night which I had laid in the early morning with a fragrant bunch of wild flowers at her studio door. I was never quite sure whether or not she had found these letters, for she did not refer to them when we were together, and I did not ask her. Now, the words of one of them flowed back to me through the gates of memory, and I repeated softly to myself:

"In the fresh beauty of this Spring, beloved, the flowers of my garden will surely bloom. The sadness that filled the valley where love dwells will vanish, and out of the hazy sky, fragrant blossoms will fall like rain.

"Before me, in the lap of other years, millions of starry lovers live silently; but this Spring two hearts beating together will meet and mingle like two drops of water that lose their identity in each other.

"This Spring my heart will be joyous as a flowing river, and suns will be reflected on its surface. Breezes will

blow over its laughing waves and diamonds will fall upon its dancing ripples.

"This Spring, my heart will melt into the sea of your all-embracing love, and I shall let it go where the birds go.

"For years I dwelt in the beautiful prison of a dream, and my soul was not satisfied nor was it ever able to soar toward the azure blue of your love, but this Spring my dream will become a reality.

"In the twilight of this Spring, you will appear, with a crown of flowers on your head, and my flowers will not be scattered to the winds.

"With the redness of the setting sun, I felt desolate, thinking of you, but this Spring, in the dawn of a new sunrise, I will embrace and hold you forever.

"When I did not know you, I was lonely for you; now that I know you, I am lonely with you, and when I am away from you, I am lonely without you; but this Spring my heart will cast away this strange loneliness.

"When I see your proud face ever brimming with sunlight, I think of my own sunless days, and when I see you laugh with a thousand graces of the sky, I wish to forget my own rayless nights.

"You have taken away my cloak of weariness, beloved; take away my coat, too—my many-colored coat of life.

"In these divine days of Spring, love has been knocking at my heart with little dancing throbs.

"What is love? Love first is a look, then a smile, then a word, then a promise, and then the meeting of two friends among the flowers.

"Love is from the world of wind and fire; its home is in the country of Day; its abode is in the lightswept soul—

rich with the stars in full glow. Music is the food of love and the colors of the rainbow are its garments.

"In the trackless world of Space, I will ever wing my way, soaring toward the palace of your beauty, and gathering traces of your footsteps."

And then the memory of another night stole upon me—the night when she had been crowned Queen of the Heavens. I had led her away from the adoring throngs, and in the stillness of the moon-lit garden I had cried out, "Del Aram, I love you! Do not make me wait any longer."

She leaned forward, and a thrill of wonder surged through me as I heard her whisper,

"*'In the fresh beauty of this Spring, beloved, the flowers of my garden will surely bloom—'* Vagabond, I love you, and I love your letters, all of them, and I have read them and I know them by heart, and they are beautiful."

And she took my face into her hands and kissed my lips—yes, she kissed my lips—my lips, breaking out into glad songs of her love—ever since—ever since!

And I brought her back into the ballroom, and the surging humanities of the Stars surrounded her, and I stood there, leaning against a pillar—a silent witness—alone.

And the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher came to me and said:

"Son of man, let us go out—under the Stars."

And I went out with Him—under the Stars.

And the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher said:

"Son of man! Blessed art thou and again blessed art thou!"

And I knelt before Him.

And He blessed me.

THE GATES OF HELL

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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Chapter XIII

THE GATES OF HELL

WHEN the Vagabonds and I reached the Plain of Firdaus, we found that Gor-Gor and Hakim Hakimian had been waiting to take to the air for some time. The latter looked at me with marked displeasure, and had it not been for the presence of Del Aram, I felt that he would have dismissed us for lack of discipline. As I looked over the plain, I saw hundreds of giant airships and superdirigibles thronged with passengers, and these, catching sight of us, let loose a wild cry of welcome, which was taken up by the great concourse of spectators which had gathered to bid us farewell. This unmistakeable sign of our popularity evidently influenced Hakim Hakimian, for with jovial bruskness he ordered the Vagabonds to accompany me aboard the Flagship, *Toufan-Saken*, the places which had been reserved for them in another airship being now occupied.

Hardly had we taken our seats than the signal for departure was given. The mighty dirigibles were released from their moorings, and division after division arose, mounting above the fleecy clouds, and soon the countless squadrons in perfect order were sailing through the ocean of air.

Aboard the Flagship, I found all the members of the First Word of Unity, and during the journey, I spent much

time by the side of Del Aram, looking up, down and around, and watching with rapturous delight the kaleidoscopic beauties unrolling before our eyes. What gandeur! What ravishing dream-realities! Days must have passed in this joyous comradship, filled with new surprises, new mysteries, new trembling deeps and visions of new Elysiums. O, to soar through the Heavens by the side of your beloved; to become the skimmer of the sky; to behold the suns; to dream among the Stars; to breathe the breath of God; to decipher the heart and the origin of things; to rush on and on toward the eternities of the Kingdom; to think aloud the Thoughts of the Creator after Him; to become a cosmic surveyor, flinging the plumb-line into the universal sky and sounding furthest into the infinite space!

It was on the science of the Humanities of the Stars that one day, on the deck of *Toufan-saken*, I questioned Jameh Zar, while a group gathered around to listen to his wisdom. He reflected a moment, then he said:

"The entire Universe is composed of spiritual matter, and spiritual matter in turn is composed of spiritual atoms. Each spiritual atom consists of a nucleus, around which spiritual electrons revolve, much as the planets revolve around their suns. On your Star, Kesh-makesh, an atom of iron differs from an atom of gold solely because of the number of planetary electrons contained in each. The nuclei, which likewise consist of electrons, differ correspondingly. Thus, all matter consists of electrons; all electrons consist of nuclei of electric energies, moving in their orbits and rushing toward one another, and all nuclei are the dynamic, spiritual centers of the Universe. To uncover the transforming power latent in these original naked nuclei and to apply it to the spiritualization of the inhabitants of

the Stars is the task of the future. Man himself must become a nucleus of spiritual energies, for he is a part of the Universe.

"The internal temperature of the Stars is very great. The sun around which Kesh-makesh and other planets revolve has a temperature of fifty million degrees. It is the nature of this heat-energy to tear away electrons from their nucleus, and thus to change one element into another; and because of the inconceivable heat in other suns, other electrons, constantly torn from their nuclei, are spinning about seeking other nuclei to which they can attach themselves and thus build New Atoms and New Matter.

"Ponder and reflect over this! Such is the station of the Etherial Man! The inner spirituality of the Etherial Man is exhaustless. World-changing Ideals emanate from him at all times, travelling up among the Stars to find new centers of life around which to build new individualities and new systems of truth and beauty."

"Why do the Stars shine?" I asked, for I could hardly follow his marvellous statements.

"Why do the Stars shine?" he repeated. "The Stars are literally radiating themselves away into space. Matter is continuously being transmuted into energy on every Star—in other words, the matter of the Stars is *annihilated* into radiation, and radiation is given away, freely, abundantly, unstintingly, madly, joyously. Similarly, the Etherial Man is a Star that transmutes his spirituality into light and pours it upon his fellowmen, generously, unsparingly, unreservedly—not asking any reward, not demanding any obediance, but giving, ever giving, always giving, never withholding."

"Then what is the significance of this vast process in

which matter is accumulated to annihilate itself in radiation?" Del Aram asked intensely.

"We are not only part of the same picture and part of the same process, but we are part of the Artist who conceived it all. The Stars are our dreams, and we are the brain-cells in the Mind of the Dreamer," Jameh Zar replied cryptically and briefly.

"Will we," I asked cautiously, "always keep on dreaming these dreams, and will our brain-cells ever become more awakened, more active?"

"Yes, rest assured of this, O Vagabond! From the standpoint of cosmic creation, Kesh-makesh was born but yesterday, and its man but today. He is at the very beginning of his existence. On the cosmic time-scale, the man of Kesh-makesh has lived only a few brief moments, and has but just begun to notice the Universe outside of himself. When the Armies of Light descend upon that Star, they must be patient with him and allow him time to develop his intellectual and spiritual faculties, for it is hardly likely that he will interpret his surroundings aright during the first few moments that his eyes are opened."

Suddenly *Toufan-saken* lurched, and we were thrown to the floor. I arose with difficulty, and looked out into the sky. A terrific wind was blowing which, before we could collect ourselves, had developed into a roaring cyclone. Now we entered a bank of impenetrable fog; rain poured down in cataracts; tremendous gales whistled and shrieked. We were in the center of a raging storm.

Our airship was dancing in mid-heaven.

The other planes were in the same plight. I could catch sight of them on the broad moving paths made by the powerful searchlights which pierced the black and murky at-

mosphere. All the while, we kept in communication with the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher on the Supreme Star.

The Evil One and his Army of Darkness had sounded their first battle-cry in this tempestuous storm, which attempted to block our progress toward their Kingdom. Thunder roared and lightning flashed about the Ships of Heaven, in an effort to break them in twain. The bottles of the sky were uncorked, and avalanches of water deluged us. I peered out of the porthole. The most infernal spectacle greeted me—grinning jaws, swollen, bloated faces! The sight struck fear into the very roots of my heart. Thousands upon thousands of unclean spirits—fiends, divs and devils—angry, vindictive—were rushing and sweeping around us. They coiled their sepulchral bodies around the ships, trying to crush in their frames. They raised their glaring eyes and poisonous tongues to our faces. I was paralyzed in an agony of fear.

Just at that moment, I turned my eyes toward the Admiral's cabin and beheld Gor-Gor and Hakim Hakimian, and straightway I collected myself and smiled. The shudders of fear that had passed over my limbs chased each other away, faintlier and faintlier, and I was myself again. There they stood, those two superhuman navigators, undisturbed, assured. Our lives were indeed safe in the hands of such captains! Surrounded by maps and charts, with dividers, parallel rulers, and all the sensitive and complicated instruments of aeronautics before them, they were keeping in constant touch, through a staff of expert officers, with the other airships, some of which had lost their bearings, and calmly attending to the innumerable details of their great trust.

The enemy waged war against us for days. At one time

we received word that several of the heavenly squadrons had been forced down, but the report turned out to be baseless. It was during these anxious hours that the order was issued for us to be ready at any moment to put on the Shining Armour, but the immediate danger passed. Thus the Prince of Darkness and his diabolical legions exhausted all their ghoulish resources, being at last constrained by the masterful tactics of Gor-Gor, the Skyman, to relinquish the attack and to fly back toward their Kingdom of Erebus.

When Gor-Gor saw the hellish crew of black raging demons routed and retreating in utter disorder before our invincible "argosies of magic sails," he heaved a sigh of relief, and radiographed to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher that the Army of Light had gained its first victory over the Army of Darkness. The same message of triumph was transmitted to all the airships and before we actually realized what had happened—we were out of the storm!

Bursting into the golden sunshine.

The silver prows of the heavenly Armada glistened majestically against a blue sky.

Washed by the seas of water, the Celestial Dreadnaughts, appearing like flocks of mammoth eagles, breasted the immeasurable firmament—

A universal service of thanksgiving was offered on all the airships. Squadron after squadron, flotilla, after flotilla, in beautiful symmetry and harmonious formation, paused in mid-heaven. From where I stood, I could see glorious vistas of the Soldiers of Light bowed down in the dust of the Stars, kneeling at the jewel-encrusted Threshold of the Divine Deliverer, praising Him for their salvation.

And then the humanities of the Stars sang together, and the sons and daughters of God shouted for joy, for the

Lord shut up the storm of Hell with doors when it broke forth, and said: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and there shall thy proud waves be stayed." Then He commanded the morning to rise out of the black clouds, and caused the dayspring to shine upon His servants; the wicked enemy was shaken sorely, his high arm was broken and his Host of Darkness scattered; the gates of death were closed before us and the thunder silenced!

It is impossible to state how much longer we remained aboard the airships after the storm, but we met with no more oppositon, and raced through the cerulean skies with the greatest joy and freedom. We must have covered many, many hundreds of thousands of miles.

At last we entered the atmosphere of a weird and ghostly country, and Gor-Gor announced that we had arrived at the first stage of our journey. The order to descend was given. It was difficult, for we were again encompassed by malignant demons, who strove to prevent us, but after much dodging and maneuvering, we landed safely on a broken and uneven plain. The aspect of this dismal country was the reverse of the equable and balmy climate of the City of the Heavens. Here were dark, bare, haunted hills, deep, gruesome valleys and volcanic mountains which towered their awful ridges on every side. Here were the lairs of batlike creatures—satyrs, imps, gnomes, jinns and divs, who flew in and among the airships, interfering and breaking into our affairs.

We landed at dusk, and all night long we were bombarded by these Mephistophelian monsters and myrmidons of the Devil. The sun dawned bringing no relief to the oppressive and gehenna-like atmosphere.

Hakim Hakimian had ordered that all the Soldiers of Light should appear on the decks of their ships at early morning, and in the first dim light of day, he addressed us, announcing that we were now at the frontier of the Kingdom of Erebus. He pointed out the great Wall of Hell, which stretched toward the East and toward the West, as far as the eye could see. Here we beheld the twelve Gates, behind which wound twelve paths which led to the City of Pandemonium, and before and around each Gate flew one of the twelve hell-born Guardians of the Bottomless Pit, brandishing his lurid sword through the air. We could easily decipher their names, which were branded in large, Stygian letters on their burning, wicked breasts:

WAR
GREED
HATE
IGNORANCE
POVERTY
SICKNESS
SUPERSTITION
INTOLERANCE
ENVY
JEALOUSY
VANITY
UGLINESS

Then suddenly, heralded by piercing shrieks, masses of satanic sappers rose from behind the Wall, mounting in whirling columns to the leaden sky and throwing down upon our heads their strangely-shaped weapons. From every quarter we were attacked, and I trembled for the safety of Del Aram, knowing that she would not spare herself. I looked at my Vagabonds, and they seemed to have fallen

under the magic spell of the demons. Desperately I shouted to them, but fear had taken possession of their hearts and they were helpless.

At that moment, I heard the voice of Hakim Hakimian. Waving the Flag of the Army of Light high above his head, he was addressing his men in a ringing voice:

"Soldiers of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher! Attack the enemy, and defeat his foul peons and legionaries! This is the hour that you should bring courage unto the Lord! These forces of the Satan are real—not imaginary. You must reckon with them. I say, arise, and carry his stronghold by the power of your arms!"

I looked around, and by Heaven, we had no arms! We did not know how to fight! We appeared like bands of raw, disorderly recruits, standing aghast, dumb, frightened before the onrush of the enemy. We were an army of hopeless imbeciles, transfixed with terror, while the forces of the Kingdom of Erebus were closing over us. Then for the first and last time I saw Hakim Hakimian lose his temper. He paced the deck like a trumping elephant, back and forth.

"I say unto you," he raged, his voice reaching every ear, "attack the enemy, otherwise your Cause is lost—irretrievably lost!"

"But we have no weapons!" I heard Sar-sar of Mars.

"You *have* weapons!" he shouted back. "Weapons which can vanquish the enemy, defeat the Guardians of the Gates, and enable you to march through the Kingdom of Erebus to the City of Pandemonium."

Oh! Oh! A ray of light struck my mind, and suddenly

it was illumined, transformed, and springing to the side of Hakim Hakimian, I cried:

"Soldiers of Heaven! You *have* weapons, and they can make you victorious over all the forces of the Universe."

"Where are they? What are they? Bring them to us!" thousands of voices called back with rising faith.

"The weapons are hidden within the arsenals of your minds and hearts. Unlock their windows, and God will hurl them at your adversaries."

"What weapons? What weapons?"

I turned to Hakim Hakimian. His face was glowing. With one look he gave me the thunder of his approval, for he felt that I had learned my lesson well. Then I faced the harassed Army, crying with all the fire of my soul:

"The Weapons are—

ACTIVE LOVE!
ACTIVE FAITH!
ACTIVE KNOWLEDGE!"

"How can we unlock the windows of our minds and hearts?" they questioned breathlessly.

"By repeating nine times in silence The Most Great Name."

Meekly the heads bowed down.

Softly the eyes were closed.

The hushed stillness of a rose-garden fell upon the souls.

Even the Army of Darkness grew strangely tranquil.

Surrounded by the Satans of Hatred, the Angels of Love were praying.

And then——A Miracle!

By the decree of Providence, the windows of our minds and hearts were flung wide open, and out from them showers of dazzling missiles flew, descending uninterruptedly

upon the panic-stricken enemy. The Soldiers of the Devil filled the spaces with their frightened shrieks. Thousands fell upon the ground, groaning in anguish, and the rest, wheeling backward in disorganized masses, disappeared behind the Wall to carry the message of defeat to their lord and master. Their sharp swords directed against us had been shivered in mid-air, and their poisonous arrows, falling at our feet, had been turned into flowers, perfuming the atmosphere and bidding us welcome!

Enheartened by the sight of this divine intervention, I sprang from the Flagship, followed by my Vagabonds, and all the Army of Light with flying banners and singing voices pressed after us. With celestial fury, we hurled ourselves against the closed Gates, the hinges giving way with deafening noise and rumbling confusion.

Our theatre of action had been changed into a battlefield strewn with countless bodies of the Evil Ones—the enemies of the Good and the Pure!

And as I looked back, I saw the twelve Guardians of the Gates of Hell, lying unconscious under the tramping feet of the advancing Angels.

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THE KINGDOM OF EREBUS

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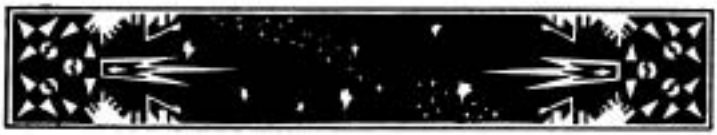

Chapter XIV

THE KINGDOM OF EREBUS

WIDESTRETCHED before our eyes lay a desolate country, freckled with volcanic eruptions, scarred with blotches and "eyesores", and glistening with the ghastly whiteness of leprosy. This immeasurable plain, known as Zandan-abad, was covered with vast fragments of goblin-like stones, and porous rocks heaped with cinders lying in matted heaps. Here and there, I saw deep, cavernous hollows and geysers, from which curled sickening smokes, deadly vapors and boiling waters, while clinking noises and cracked, sepulchral sounds came darkly to our ears.

The sky was overcast and sultry, and the upper strata of the air was thick with the shifting armies of the Great Adversary, awaiting their opportunity to sweep down and scatter us to all parts of that howling plain.

Behind us lay the City of the Heavens; behind us, clustered together—our only means of safety and return—the airships which we might never see again; behind us lay the Wall of Hell, towering, menacing, adamant!

And before us—O my God! What cragged, demoniacal country! What spectacles of horror! The very sight of Zendan-abad sent through every nerve and fibre of my body tingling sensations of agony. Never in my wildest moment of chaotic dreaming could I have imagined that such an

unutterable, diabolical region of damnation could exist in God's Universe.

The multitude of the Army of Light crouched shivering, breathless, their faces stamped with horror at the dreadful appearances moving and flying on land and through the air. We were indeed begirt with the burning belt of annihilation, and the baleful shades of Death seemed ready to kiss our wan and pallid lips.

Hakim Hakimian requested Del Aram and her regiment of women to accompany him as a moral support to his soldiers, but neither I nor my Vagabonds could see any good coming out of her separation from us. The Vagabonds had come to adore her as their goddess, and would at any moment have risked their all to protect her from an attack coming from the direction either of Heaven or of Hell. Yet we had no voice in the matter, and reluctantly and with some misgivings, we saw her go.

Feeling that the Band of the Vagabonds could work more effectively for the whole Army of Light if they remained inseparable, I told them that no matter what might happen to the various regiments in their march through Zendan-abad, we must hold to one another and let nothing divide us—even though our bodies were torn asunder or burned to ashes.

While we were taking a solemn oath to abide by this promise, Gor-Gor arose, and looking straight into the apprehensive faces of his army, he addressed them:

"Soldiers of Light! Let none of these baleful appearances daunt your resolution nor weaken your conviction that you are born to conquer. The only use of an obstacle is to overcome it! These obstacles, insurmountable and dreadful as they may seem, should not frighten you, but

should rather challenge your powers of endurance. In the future, one of your most priceless recollections will be the fact that you triumphed over every impediment in your path to the City of Pandemonium.

"Your spirit can vanquish the wrath of the Prince of Darkness!

"Your spirit can defeat the legions of Hell!

"By the invulnerable power of your spirit, you can shatter the dark forces of Satan!

"Have no fear!

"Hold fast to your Shining Armour, to the Talismans of the Secret Names and to the Vials of Radiant Liqueure, and be ready to use them whenever Hakim Hakimian or I give the word."

While Gor-Gor was giving the above commands, I detected a lurking demon who was straining to catch every word. This evil spirit, when he caught sight of me, spiraled upward, and bestriding a spotted cloud, rode briskly in the direction of the City of Pandemonium.

"And now let us advance," God-Gor brought his admonitions to a close. "Courage, brave men and women of the Stars!

"March!

"March!

"March!"

There was a pause, a moment of waiting, a looking of one to the other to see who would go first, and then Hakim Hakimian with waving banner sprang to the open, and the march of the Army of Light through Zendan-abad began.

Ere we had covered the first league, the day was turned into night and noon into evening. On all sides we heard the piercing shrills of the Devils; the valleys and moun-

tains groaned and shook; the earth was draughty with the hissing of pent-up winds; curtains of suffocating steam swirled around us and rivers of boiling water deluged our paths, scalding our unprotected bodies. Yet blindly and doggedly we groped through the horrors of Hell. Now we were on the brim of a belching volcano which vomited lava and cinders, and again in the depths of a gruesome canyon, clambering up its perilous trails. Through it all we forged ahead, keeping in touch with one another, and constantly crying: "God is the Deliverer!"

The Vagabonds displayed a high order of heroism and saved the lives of numerous soldiers who had fallen into the yawning chasms and the bogs of burning mud. Singing, making light of their task, thoroughly enjoying the new adventure, they thought nothing of what they were doing. It was novelty to them. In Hell they were saving the lives of the Angels. That was what they had expected to do. That was what they were doing. They were *raising Heaven in Hell!*

As we proceeded on, the country became one vast quagmire—marshy, swampy, sloppy, soft. Our feet slipped incessantly and unwary ones were constantly sinking into the darksome slime and having to be rescued. These Vagabonds, incomparable, debonaire, jocular, jaunty, sparkling with sportiveness, performed prodigious feats and fully deserved the title given to them then and there by their fellow soldiers: "Heroes of Hell."

During all these hours, I had not caught a glimpse of Hakim Hakimian nor had I heard the voice of Del Aram. Gor-Gor we had not seen from the start. I began to be alarmed. If harm came to them, what would happen to the Army? Who would lead it? It was a fearful thought. Where

were they? It was true that we had been left to our own devices, having simply been told to struggle across the plain of Zendan-abad to the best of our ablity and to join forces at the other end.

As time went on, I could no longer hear the tramping feet of the Army nor the voices of the soldiers. An ominous silence enveloped us. I called the names of my Vagabonds, and all answered back. They had kept their pledge. Like a band of steel, they were around me. Then loud and lustily I shouted the names of the First Word of Unity and those of many others, but only the echoes of my voice returned to me. I filled Hell with the name of Del Aram! Del Aram! Del Aram!—but no answer. What had happened to her? What had happened to Gor-Gor and the Army of Light? An awful fear and a sense of consternation took possession of my heart. Dark, dark, impenetrable dark! Nothing could be seen one foot ahead of us. We strained feverishly to get out of the bogs, but no sooner were we out of one than we could sink into another.

Then, just as suddenly as it had begun, the swamp came to an end, and we found ourselves on solid ground. A wide plain stretched before us, but it revealed not the least trace of our companions of the sky. This was indeed no other than the work of the Devil. He had neatly succeeded in cutting us off from the main army. Wearied, bewildered, harassed, but still undaunted, we pushed on, until we found ourselves at the foot of a Vesuvius-like mountain. We attacked it boldly, and after hours of hardship, reached the summit. There as we stood for a moment, exhausted, taking in deep breaths of the poisonous air, the mountain shivered under us, and even before our very eyes, with a soar as of ten thousand and ten thousand guns, was riven in

twain, and the Band of Vagabonds was divided, half of them clinging to the one part and half to the other. We scrambled to our feet and stood facing each other, laughing in the presence of this new danger, while the two crests rocked and wavered. Then, with a sound the mightiness of which no language can describe, the two summits of the cloven mountain fell from their burning base, and rushed, an avalanche of fire, into the depths below.

Carried on the foaming surface of that river of molten lava, our eyes filled with smoke, our lungs with steaming, suffocating vapors—wild, haggard, battling against preternatural forces, submerged under the pitchy waters of Hell, tossed by billows of venomous fluid—mysterious, gusty winds rising and falling—utter darkness spreading over all—we, as a band of wandering and lost souls, were borne in and out, down and up, through the subterranean cellars and labyrinthian caves of the Nether World.

But, even here, we were stronger than the Arch-fiend with all his infernal inventions, for he had not been able to separate us—the Vagabonds—one from the other. Riding on the tide of the Stygian stream, we managed to find each other, and floating side by side, we conversed in the noblest fashion on the philosophy of the Devil, his moral principles and methods of action, discovering the most amusing and entertaining points in his character. Even we laughed—laughed loud and high—so that as we were carried on that river of fire and brimstone, the galleries of Hell resounded and reverberated with our merriment and the quib and quip of our jokes. The river of molten lava rolled on and on, and we rolled with it, until at last it reached the open and emptied itself into a sea of black waters, called Daryashour. But before the stream of slug and mud could

dump us into that ocean, we had fastened to its steaming banks and lifted ourselves onto the sands.

Here I saw an interminable desert, on which the burning glare of an unusual sun was pouring its scorching rays; sand and sand-dunes as far as the eye could see, no trees—not even the stunted vegetation of an earthly desert; no water—only the Ocean of Darya-shour, coiling its black lava and boiling, salty fluid on its desperate bosom.

In the heart of this Sahara, known as Zamin-bi-sabzi, was a strange and awful sight—a massed concourse of dark beings, gathered about a totem-pole on which were suspended one above the other, human beings—God!—Doust Parast, Jameh Zar, Hakim Hakimian, Gor-Gor, and on the very top, Del Aram—in fact, all the Letters of the First Word of Unity. Their hands were lashed to the pole and their mouths strapped with leathern thongs.

This was indeed the Tree of Life, the fruits of which were for the healing of nations—raised in Hell! This was the tree of the humanities of the Stars, prepared for martyrdom in the ghastly temple of Molloch!

Below the pole and all around, in infinite circles, the Army of Light was huddled on the fiery sands, their hands tied to their backs and their mouths similarly strapped with leathern thongs, and before each was placed his Shining Armour, his Talisman and his Vial of Radiant Liqueure. Beyond them thousands of other captives in identical attitudes were ranged, ready for the universal sacrifice. The Prince of the Kingdom of Erebus, surrounded by his court, was viewing with great satisfaction this scene of his triumph. On his right hand, I observed the same evil spirit who had listened to the words of Gor-Gor before we had started on our march. Here was the Army of Darkness gloating

over the Army of Light, and awaiting the final command of their lord to start the ceremonies of a universal massacre.

In less time than it takes to tell of it, I and my Vagabonds grasped the whole situation. Benumb with horror as we were, of one thing we felt sure: The enemy, in destroying the mountain and casting us upon the loathsome stream flowing through the galleries of Hell, had thought that we were disposed of, for no one could have been expected to survive that boiling mass of lava and poison.

Desperately we searched in our minds for a plan of action, and all of a sudden a thought struck me, and I realized I had found the key to the door of deliverance. In the Universal University, Hakim Hakimian had interested me to attend a very small class, in which he taught the "Language of the Eyes" and trained his pupils to see far into space. After class hours, he and I had often gone into the open, and with "word-rays" emanating from our eyes, had held long test-conversations.

Now our long immersion in the Cimmerian stream had given to me and my Vagabonds the appearances of the Evil Ones. As we looked at that hour, even the Angels of the Supreme Star would have pronounced us enemies of God and man, and we had seen enough of the Devils by this time to be able to imitate them perfectly. Of course, we always had felt devilish, and now we had the chance of our lives to look and play the part. I have no doubt that the Wicked One himself could not have detected in a thousand years the fact that we were Angels, and I am certain that he would have been glad to welcome us in his hall of revelry as partners in crime.

So, no sooner had I thought of the "Language of the

Eyes,'" than I ascended a small hill, and surrounded by my Vagabonds, I directed my gaze toward Hakim Hakimian, who was the third of those suspended on the totem-pole. At first I had difficulty in attracting his attention, and when finally I caught his eye and began to talk to him, he thought that I was a Devil possessing the secret language of Heaven. But I continued, recalling moments on the Supreme Star, and telling him of our terrible experiences. Suddenly he realized who I was, and O, the happiness of the look which he turned upon me—how can I ever describe it! Then his eyes became two fountains of light, shooting word-rays into my heart—word-rays which told me that we must don our Shining Armour, attack the enemy, and bring deliverance to the Army of Light—quickly, quickly, with lightning speed—otherwise we would be too late.

Capering down from the hill, singing, rollicking, a band of jolly old Devils, we joined the throngs around the totem-pole, and insinuated ourselves among their serried circles. The Army of Darkness, thinking that we were an item on the program of the day, watched us with anticipation. The Army of Light, thinking that the final moment had arrived, turned their eyes away from us in horror and despair. In and out among the Soldiers of the Lord, we danced, with grotesque abandon, grinning into their faces as we whispered words of instruction, jostling them with rough derision as we slit the leathern thongs. Then I straightened myself, and stood erect one moment before the armies, and from every quarter arose the Soldiers of Light, clad in their invincible Shining Armour, and with a shout of "God is the Deliverer!"—a mighty shout that shook the very hearts of the Devils—all rushed together to the totem-pole, and in one second, the Great Captives were set free.

When the Army of Darkness became suddenly aware that something was wrong with these mischievous demons, their rage and exasperation knew no bounds, and gnashing their teeth in imbecile fury, they hurled themselves upon the massed army around the totem-pole. Thousands upon thousands fell before us, as withered leaves caught in a gale, and wildly shrieking like lost souls in the valley of impotence and humiliation, the rest of them fell away and disappeared in sickening clouds of smoke.

The happiness and jubilation of the Army of Light was unlimited. Brother embraced brother and the countless prisoners saved by mere accident from the jaws of Hell, took part in our rejoicing. Then, gathering once more about our lifted standard, and with our beloved leaders again beside us, we bowed our heads on the soft sands in mute and holy thanksgiving. At that moment I knelt by Del Aram, and she held my grimy hand to her lips, and later when I had withdrawn it, I found that she had washed it with her tears.

Then Gor-Gor revealed to us the fact that there was but one obstacle left in our path—the Sea of Darya-shour, and he commanded that each Soldier of Light should guarantee the safe crossing of one of our newly-acquired allies, which was done amid glad hosannas.

After this, he led us to the shore, and without hesitation, entered the boiling waters, striking out for our unknown destination. The intrepid Soldiers of Light followed him, keeping ever watchful eyes on their charges, and soon the surface of Darya-shour was covered with the swimmers of the Stars.

We had advanced far, far into the very heart of the sea, when suddenly the sky was streaked with blue, white

and red flashes of lurid and fantastic lightning. Looking up I beheld the monster shapes of our enemies holding council in mid-air. Their aerial hall was further illumined by thousands of forked torches, held by attending demons, which cast a green, unearthly light upon their lascivious faces.

Then the gales began to blow, causing mountainous waves to rise about us, and rivers of fire poured from the clouds into the already intolerable waters. It was a great sight—never to be repeated!

While I was swimming in that sea of fire, I realized, as never before, the pomp and circumstance, the étage and flourish, the gala and promenade, the splendor and equipage of the Imperial court of the Devil. He was great! Who greater? Ah, I knew of two who were greater—God and the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher!

It is one thing, however, to hold high thoughts of moral grandeur and another to be literally boiled in an ocean of fire. Our invulnerable Armour was melting; our bodies were burning; our entrails were set on fire, and the Evil One was at the point of triumph!

It was at this moment of excruciating pain that I beheld the extraordinary figure of Gor-Gor rising out of the flaming sea and proudly standing on its crested waves! Never had he been so overpowering! The very sight of him electrified the hopeless Soldiers of Light, and his ringing voice reached every ear:

"Children of Heaven! We have suffered long enough from the hands of the enemy. By the Command of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, arise out of the sea, bring forth your Talismans and read the Secret Names!"

As if by magic, our energies were restored, and we re-

sponded as one soul. Like a great forest, we arose out of the waters, standing on the prows of the waves, and unsealing the Talismans, we read their contents by the glare of the descending fires of Hell:

"GOD IS ALL-VITALITY!
"GOD IS ALL-ENERGY!
"GOD IS ALL-LIFE!
"GOD IS ALL-POWER!"

The sea and the sky were filled with our voices.
The avalanche of fire ceased.
The Powers of Darkness were scattered to the four winds.
Balmy and life-giving breezes began to waft.
The waters of Darya-shour became calm, clear, transparent and cool.
The atmosphere was refreshing and fragrant.

Once more we heard the voice of Gor-Gor:
"Open your vials and share their contents with your spiritual wards."

The Radiant Liqueure was no other than the elixir of immortal youth. It was the sparkling draught of the gods. It brought to our wearied limbs a surging vitality; it gave to our feet a new strength; it granted to our eyes a new vision; it bestowed upon our minds a new vigor; it imparted to our hearts a new life.

We were resurrected out of the watery grave!

Triumphantly, proudly, humbly, the Army of Light walked on the sea toward the unknown shore.

THE CITY OF PANDEMONIUM

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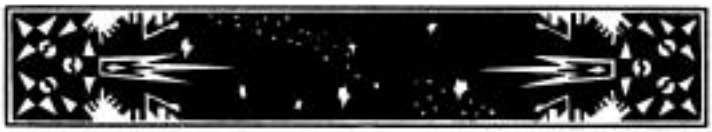

Chapter XV

THE CITY OF PANDEMONIUM

THE victorious apostles of the Kingdom were walking on the sea, for the Lord of the Army of Light had triumphed! With their faith and courage high, with their banners streaming in the breeze, lo and behold, they were walking on the sea and singing the anthem of the Stars!

And then, on the distant horizon appeared the palaces of the City of Pandemonium, and as we approached the shore, the great buildings with their turrets and their pillars, their porticos and domes, became distinct against a silent background.

At last our feet touched solid earth, and we advanced over a deserted land. Not one sound rose from the city, not one puff of smoke. Baleful castles towered before us, sinister, forbidding, mantled in a hush of death. We could distinguish no sign, no trace of any movement ordinarily associated with the life of a city. As we passed through the great portals and explored the wide avenues and boulevards, the gruesome solemnity and grave-like pomposity displayed on every side annoyed and depressed us. No human being could have endured the crushing weight of this inactivity. He would have become mad among those rows of palaces and gardens—undesirable, inappropriate, unbecoming.

When the larger part of the Army of Light had penetrated

into the City Gor-Gor mounted the steps leading to a giant belfry which commanded a vastly proportioned public square, and appearing on the top, addressed his men, who were crowding the place and the streets leading to it from every direction:

"Soldiers of Light! Through the bounty and mercy of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, you have at last reached your destination, the City of Pandemonium. Have no fear regarding the future. You are from this moment under the protection of the Lord of Hosts. You have been tested and tried, and have not been found wanting.

"The hardships of this passage were terrific, and you have suffered as no army has suffered. This experience has taught me that, in our future campaigns against the Forces of the Evil One, we must be far better equipped. The consummate strategies of our enemy have outstripped our peaceful and conciliatory measures and from now on we must fight him inch by inch at his own game. There is no other way. While we have been teaching and practicing love in the City of the Heavens, the Army of Darkness has been applying all its genius to the perfection of such marvellous and efficient engines of universal destruction that beauty and wholesomeness have been brought well-nigh to the verge of annihilation.

"Had it not been for the timely arrival of the Vagabond and his intrepid Band, the Letters of the Word of Unity and all our comrades and all those captives, now set free, would have been lost—irretrievably lost. Friends! We are under an obligation which we shall never be able to repay. Only the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher can reward these Heroes of the Stars!"

Then pandemonium was let loose and applause, deafening, disconcerting, shook the very foundations of the City of the Devil, bringing to it that substance of life which had been lacking. The uproar was preposterous, and made us embarrassed and ashamed.

We, the Vagabonds, as free as the fresh breezes of the dawn; as unfettered as the deer of the forest; as joysome as the trilling birds; as unsteady as agile quicksilver—to be taken so seriously! It was a pity.

We tried to tell these things to the hilarious and uncontrolled soldiers, but they did not wish to listen, and continued to make the wide stretches of the city resound with their hurrahs.

After the long agony of fear and hardship, the floodgates had been withdrawn, and no human power could have held in check the impetuosity of their turbulent emotions. They sang, they danced, forming and reforming in everchanging, ever-varying circles, like children out of school, or men gone mad. Even the Letters of the Word of Unity took part in the frenzied celebration, chanting popular and unconventional ditties, and encouraging the soldiers in the most reckless fashion. Surrounded and enveloped, freeing ourselves from the hands of one only to fall into the hands of many, it occurred to me that it would have been more pleasant to meet the serried ranks of the Devil, and be torn to pieces once for all.

And all the while, by way of adding wood to the general conflagration, and lending his prestige and sanction to the celestial lawlessness, Gor-Gor, the Vice-President of the Universal University and the General of the Army of Light, stood on the top of the Devil's belfry, laughing and clapping his hands.

Have I said that the City of Pandemonium was oppressive in its silence? I spoke too soon. This *was* after all the Pandemonium City, and if the Devils were keeping quiet in their own haunts, the Angels were supplying the fanfare, the racket, and the uproar, showing that after all there is really very little—hardly any—difference between them.

O thou Satanic Majesty! What a comment and dissertation on thine angelic nature!

And O thou Angelic Lord! What an essay and sermon on thy satanic inheritance!

When the mad merry-makers were nearing the point of exhaustion, Gor-Gor took it into his head to restore order. It was no easy task to control the elemental passions of joy and relief which had changed these men into children, and he took some time to make himself heard. But at last silence reigned, and in a tone of suave authority, just as if nothing had happened, he addressed the soldiers:

"Friends! The time has arrived for you to visit the Palaces of Pandemonium. Each regiment will map its own sight-seeing tour and choose its own field of exploration. Do not try to see too much, for the buildings are without number, and you could not see them all though you sojourned here for years. And when you hear the sound of the bugle, return to the shore, for before the dawn of another day we must embark on our homeward journey."

In high good humour, the Army of Light scattered through the streets of the Pandemonium City. The Letters of the Word of Unity chose to accompany the Vagabonds, and together we selected a mighty castle, overlooking the Ocean of Darya-shour, for the scene of our adventure.

Cautiously yet jauntily we passed through the spacious

court and mounted the marble stairs. When we reached the top, we entered a series of vast and tortuous galleries, on the walls and ceilings of which were suspended weird forms of demons, gargoyles, gnomes, jinns, divs, satyrs, ghouls, harpies, vampires, furies, sirens, monsters, fiends, ogres, and Mephistophelian shapes, in postures of infinite variety, with here and there, at wide-stretched intervals, the model of an angelic form.

The strangest part of this display was that every now and then, one of the figures would become loosened from its position, and clattering down upon the floor, would smash into a thousand pieces. As we wandered through the halls, nearly two hundred of them fell, causing much merriment among us. Del Aram ran with the gleefulness of a child from one fallen Devil to another, and the Vagabonds, of course, took it as supreme sport, and filled the galleries with their laughter and exclamation.

While we were occupied in picking our way through the piles of debris, and dodging the still falling demons, I noticed with amazement that those fragments which in falling struck the heads of the Letters of the Word of Unity, were changed in every instance into rays of light, which in turn, radiating to all parts of the galleries, touched the suspended likenesses of the Evil Ones, and down they came with a crash.

And now the arching vaults of the ceilings revealed a most unexpected sight. The spaces emptied by the falling figures of the Devils had become occupied by representations of seraphic beauty. Jahan-nama, the painter from Uranus and Tasveer-kash, the sculptor from Neptune, were so struck by the rhythm and symmetry of these gods and madonnas,

that they at once set themselves to copy the divine lines before them.

The curious and inexplicable way in which these statues were loosened without active agency, and the even more miraculous manner in which their places were immediately taken by the loveliest shapes and images of Heaven, baffled and intrigued us to such an extent, that when the call of the bugle broke upon our ears, we tore ourselves away, unsatisfied and with regret. What had we gleaned from this intricate lesson? What conclusion had we reached from this symbolical representation? What illumination had we gained from the City of Hell?

Our artist brothers found themselves unable to leave the heavenly masterpieces whose unusual and distinctive beauty they might never find again. How they looked back at these visions as we bore them away! How they wept and lamented like souls deprived of Paradise!

When the Soldiers of Light, all of whom had undergone identical experiences in different palaces, had assembled on the seashore, Gor-Gor, who well realized their bewilderment, addressed them as follows:

"The effigies which you have seen in those palaces are but counterparts of the malignant forces and diabolical conditions which actually exist on all the planets and inhabited Stars of the Universe. Suspended from the ceilings and walls, they will remain as long as their originals are alive and active, but no sooner is a malignant power defeated and replaced by a benevolent one, than its replica in the Pandemonium City collapses, while its place is taken by a reflecton of the Good Force which has come into being.

"This cosmic evolutionary process of replacing the shapes of Evil Powers by the shapes of Good Powers has been go-

ing on since humanity arose from the level of the animal kingdom, and will continue until all men, on all Stars, appear in the image and likeness of their Creator. A time will come, when the palaces in the Pandemonium City will be entirely cleansed from the symbols of the Evil which at the present hour rules over the planets, and when all the places left vacant will be adorned by the Symbols of the Good and the Pure. Then these images of Benevolence and Purity will leave their stations on the walls and ceilings, and taking possession of the City, will people it with the attributes of God; and it shall be called the City of Heavenly Harmony. Then the Kingdom of Hell will become the Kingdom of Heaven and night will be turned into day.

"Destiny had reserved for you this greatest of all mysteries—the mystery of the transmutation of Evil into Good, of silver into gold; and your mission, and the burden of your message to your respective peoples is to impress upon their minds and hearts the effective and important part that they have to play in the establishment of the Kingdom of the Good and Pure. Make them realize the fact that whenever they hold a Good Thought, speak a Good Word, or perform a Good Act, they are helping in the cleansing of the City of Pandemonium and hastening the coming of the Kingdom of God on all the starry spheres. Only in this manner will the Era of Universal Brotherhood and Peace be established in the hearts of men.

"And when that Day has come—that Day of glad and full fruition, men shall arise from their dusty beds, each one shining as the sun, and the Children of the Stars will enter their everlasting home.

"This is the Mansion that the Lord has been preparing for His people. If you help in the universal unveiling of this

mystery, every eye shall behold God's matchless splendor, and the Army of Light will witness His triumph over all the worlds.

"O Children of the Stars!
"Carry this Great Message to your people!
"Dedicate your lives to its promotion!
"Unfurl its triumphant banner to the winds!
"Sow its seeds in the fields of the souls!
"Enkindle its lamps in the congregation of the mighty!
"Fill the immeasurable spaces with its melody!
"Immortalize the spirits by its life-giving call!"

We retraced our steps to the frontier of the Kingdom of Erebus, and turned the prows of our airships toward the Supreme Star.

STAR-MASTER AND STAR-PUPIL

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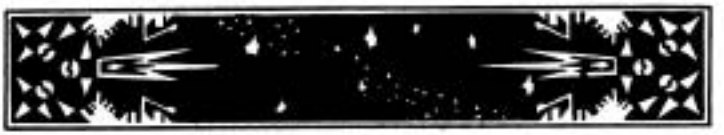

Chapter XVI

STAR-MASTER AND STAR-PUPIL

UNWOUNDED, unfatigued, after our journey through the Kingdom of Erebus, we reached the Plain of Firdaus. As the scarred and battered Airships of Heaven circled above the sea of upturned faces, millions of hands were raised to them, and millions of voices roared their welcome.

On the voyage homeward, we had had ample time to converse with the captives whom we had set free from the Sahara of Zameen-bi-Sabzi, as we shared with them our cabins and our beds, and the very first thing that we did was to radio their names to their families and to the government of the Supreme Star. It seemed that they had engaged in visits of exploration in the vicinity of the Kingdom of Erebus, either out of curiosity, or in the performance of their duties, and that the Devils, observing their foolhardiness and noticing that they were not sufficiently armed, had taken possession of them and carried them off to their dark domain, there to eke out years in loneliness and fear.

When the airships were finally anchored in their hangars, the crowd surged in among them, literally bearing us off our feet, and women and children, finding their husbands and fathers long given up for lost, were embracing them ecstatically, weeping, laughing, exclaiming, rejoicing. Many of

the children had grown up, and the fathers would not have recognized them, had it not been for the invisible bond which drew them together. The spectators, who had come to celebrate, were moved to tears by this scene, and even the eyes of the Vagabonds were very far from dry.

The same afternoon, my regiment and I stood before the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher in the Peace Room of the Universal University, whose windows overlooked the Mountain of Light. The Letters of the First Word of Unity were grouped about Him, and here, out of the abundance of His love, He addressed us, saying:

"O ye sky-hearted Vagabonds! You have done well, more than well. You have served your fellow beings, and served them unselfishly. You have saved lives, and saved them at the expense of your own. You have made the inhabitants of the Supreme Star happier because you have lived, dreamed, sung and acted. It is most difficult, even for me, to thank you and to applaud your courage. We are proud because we belong to you. Our University is honored because you have honored it. I stand before you and speak not of my own gratitude, not even of the gratitude of your fellow Students, but of the gratitude of the humanities of the Stars. Their hearts will quiver with the throbbings of your hearts, their souls will burn with the fire of your songs. Through your heroism, you will make the worlds to stand still and listen to your story. You will inspire the people to rise from their beds of indifference and scale the sunstruck ridges of Glory. You will make them feel the weightless grandeur of your devotion, as the shoulders of the birds feel the ecstasy and freedom of their wings. Men will dream your dreams and wake to your dawn. Throughout the coming cycles, on all the Stars, your story will be told and re-

told, and you shall live—and you shall live in the hearts of the people, for ages without end."

He paused, and the Vagabonds knelt before Him to receive His benediction. And when He had laid His blessed hands upon our heads, we joined the others in the circle around Him, and He began to teach:

"To-day in many of the celestial islands that float in the ocean of space, millions of soldiers stand ready for general destruction. In the past histories of all the Stars, the favorite occupation of the nations has been the periodical changing of the names of their countries and of the colors and designs of their flags. And, when temporarily deprived of these glories, they have engaged themselves in the deification of material things remaining in a state of lethargic indifference to the Mysteries of Creation."

"And what is the aim of Life?" asked Del Aram.

"The aim of Life," He answered, "is to free man from the thraldom of matter; to teach him through the arts that God is the Master-Artist; that these Stars hanging in the infinite firmament are His studios, and that we are all of us His students. In order to appreciate this lesson, we must have Peace, and Peace cannot be realized unless we are born from the Kingdom of Artifice into the Kingdom of Art. This is the meaning of the words of one of God's Artists who was sent to Kesh-makesh some two thousand years ago. He said, and His saying is truth: 'Verily, verily I say unto you, unless a man is born again, he shall not see the Kingdom of Heaven.' "

"And when shall these things be?" I questioned.

"The day will come when these things shall be, even on your planet. According to God's timepiece, it will not be long in coming. I see the age when through the inculcation of

the lessons of Art, men will become peaceful and profess no other religion save that of Spiritual Wisdom and Sublime Beauty, and when they will entertain no other conviction save the conviction that life is immortal, and its possibilities boundless."

"On my planet, these things shall be?" I questioned again, with delight and wonder.

"Yes, Vagabond!" He answered reassuringly. "Stumbling-blocks in the path of their fulfillment there will be aplenty, but the spirit will always overcome them. Terrestrial men are still in their infancy, and have not yet emerged from their primitive ways and habits of thinking. They play with trifles and obey false masters whom they have imposed upon themselves. They love to divide into nations and to dress in national costumes, that they may exterminate each other to the sound of music. Afterwards, they erect statues to those crowned assassins and merciless butchers who have been their leaders in the general slaughter of their brethren. They eulogize them as heroes and patriots and set them up as peerless examples to be emulated by their children and grandchildren."

"What a deplorable state of affairs!" Jameh Zar exclaimed.

"Truly deplorable and utterly discouraging to many," the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher sympathized with him, "for if at times the thoughts of a few have been directed to questions of a higher order—the existence of God, the nature of the soul and its immortality, the intellectual freedom of man, the potency of art and its innate spirituality—they have been persecuted by the ignorant, ostracised beyond the pale of human society, thrown into prison, stigmatized as heretics, blinded, quartered or hanged on the cross. And another

group, who call themselves materialistic philosophers and champions of freedom, deny the very existence of God, and go their own way, inventing strange deities, 'dynamo gods,' infamous and cruel gods who have never had any existence save in their own unenlightened imaginations. Then, in the names of these gods, they commit every outrage against the human conscience, and enslave weak minds in a bondage which is most difficult to break."

This rather depressing picture from the tongue of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher made us unhappy, and He felt our mood, therefore He said:

"The World's Holy Spirit will set at nought these human barriers. Do not be down-hearted. God carries the humanities of the Stars onward and upward in spite of themselves. The day will soon be here when they will know that they are the dwellers of the skies; that they are living in truth, in knowledge and in freedom; that they are the Children of Light and that theirs is the vision splendid."

"And while we are thinking and dreaming and working for that day," interposed Hakim Hakimian, "what kind of teachings should we spread among the children of Kesh-makesh when we are in their midst?"

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher reflected a moment and then, turning His shining countenance to all of us, He said:

"When we are among the children of Kesh-makesh, let us be very patient with them, and lead them gently along the path of spiritual unfoldment. Let us teach them that the Age has dawned when divine and human fellowship must become a reality; that the Century has come when all the religions of the Earth must be harmonized through the love of God; that the Dispensation has arrived in which all the

nations shall enjoy the blessings of International Peace; that the Cycle has appeared when racial, religious, national and political prejudices must be abandoned; that the Epoch has been unveiled when all the peoples shall dwell in the confederation of one family and live in the plane of Spirit. From this time onward, let Understanding be the law; let Truth be the law; let Love be the law."

"And will the people listen to us?" I asked in a doubtful tone.

"Yes," the Blessed One answered. "They will listen to you if you first rely on the World's Holy Spirit and then embody in your lives the doctrines that you proclaim; for an *ideal* incarnated in a human temple can change the surface of any planet and its traces will remain forever."

"My Lord! Such has not been my experience." Sar-sar spoke with a voice born from bitter disillusionment. "I have always been a lover of peace, have tried to express its ideals in my relations with my fellowmen on Mars, doing my utmost to teach them the beautiful ways of peace. But the people would not listen to me. They laughed me to scorn, and took my resignation and submission for weakness and feebleness of character.

"I tried to lift them up to the highest zenith of glory, but they cast me headlong into the lowest nadir of humiliation. I tried to make them love one another, but they waxed the more venomous and hateful. I tried to make of their hearts gardens of amity and conciliation, but they turned them into charnel-houses of discord and animosity. I tried to idealize their materialistic civilization and to spiritualize their human relationships, but I was loathed, despised and adjudged a dangerous revolutionary from whose radical

teachings the capitalistic religion and the militaristic government of Mars should be protected.

"O Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher! I tried, tried, tried, but they would not listen to me. They would have no peace, but clamoured for war. Then I became an outcast, a wanderer on the face of Mars, and roamed from pole to pole—alone, companionless, homeless, shelterless, hungry, thirsty, always living in the shadow of ignominy, an object of pity and derision, despised, condemned, repudiated—alone, alone, wholly alone!"

He broke down under the weight of his emotions, and weeping copious tears, threw his trembling body before the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, pleading with Him to incline the hearts of his people toward peace. I could watch him no longer, but turned my face toward Del Aram whom I observed had worked herself up to a high pitch of rebellion.

Del Aram's temperament was not on the whole made for peace and tranquility. Her blood cried for action and storm. She would not listen to arguments of peace at any price, but was ready to fight the enemies of honorable peace with their own weapons. She did not believe in the doctrine of a pacific settlement of *all* problems, but claimed that there were certain fundamental questions which could not be adjusted by non-combative measures, and that the only way to solve them was to wage war against war. Even God did not relish the picture of a minority which sat in a corner, praying for peace, while the majority not only completely ignored but trampled over its supine bodies.

Once, when she had been cleverly feeding the flames of a local spiritual revolution against the unjustifiable tyranny and autocracy of a "bloc of sophisticated, atheistic, modernistic Angels," I had held up to her one of our Earthly mot-

toes—"Safety First"—and had cautioned her to be as wise as a serpent and as harmless as a dove. She had turned her back upon me and would have nothing to do with my compromising spirit and timid calculating soul.

"What must I do in order to crown the planet Mars with the bejewelled diadem of Peace?" Sar-sar was still wailing. The Spirit of the Words' Teacher looked at Del Aram, and she knew that He wished her to answer. She arose from her seat, approached the pitiful figure of Sar-sar, and addressed him in a flood of dynamic words:

"Sar-sar, wake up! Stand on your feet! What is the use of all this childish weeping and sentimental incompetance? Open your eyes! You must live dangerously—for peace. Adventure greatly—for peace. You can never attain peace by non-resistance. They will use you as they have used you in the past. They will destroy you as they have destroyed most of your Army of Light. You must be strong, feel strong, act strong to fight the enemies of peace!

"I have told the Vagabond that peace will never be obtained with the drab and colorless slogan of 'Safety First!' As long as the inhabitants of the planets are primarily thinking of themselves and of others afterwards, there will be no peace. Sar-sar! Lose yourself, then you will find yourself. Cease to think of 'Mars First,' and you others, forget to think of 'Jupiter First,' 'Neptune First,' 'Mercury First.' Discard the shibboleth of: 'My Globe First.' What is your globe? Tell me, what is it? A speck of dust, a cosmic accident, a fortuitious concurrence of atoms, a minor crustal phenomenon! That is all.

"Your whole system of thinking must be revolutionized. You are living in a domain of fallacies, and optical illusions. Your minds are warped, and in every one of you there

is, more or less, a fixity of ideas. Your theories are jaundiced and you are short-sighted, partial, purblind, looking to your own interests, feathering your own nests. You have brought your limited and insular expressions even to the Universal University. Out upon you! I say it aloud, and I say it in the presence of our Beloved Teacher, who has been trying to open your eyes to higher planes—out upon you a thousand times!

"Look at the Vagabond! Look at him well! He thinks that he is full of universalistic dreams, but I say in his presence and for his benefit that he is narrow, Earth-centered! He wants everything for the Earth! He wants to take the Spirit of the World's Teacher to the Earth! He wants to take you and me and thousands of others to the Earth! He is working all of us to death, for what? Earth. The pillars of the Heavens are being shaken with the thunder of Earth. All that the Angels are thinking of nowadays is what they can do for the Earth. The Vagabond has tainted and contaminated us with Earthly substances. Instead of looking toward the higher Heavens, we are gazing through the abysmal depths at the Earth. The clear atmosphere of the sky has become polluted with the dust of Earth. The Vagabond is the most celebrated Earth-centric creature in all the Universe, and he claims to be universal! What egotism on his part to come to the Court of the Stars and form that prideful Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society! Where is the universality of all his plans? Earth! Earth! Earth! Since I have come to know him I have heard in Heaven nothing but—Earth! Earth! Earth!

"Peace! There can be no peace until the poisonous germs of all these planet-centered ideas are destroyed. I stand on the ground of peace and I am an advocate of peace,

but peace not for Mars alone, not for the Earth alone, not for this or that globe alone, but peace for the humanities of all the Stars! You cannot monopolize peace and prosperity, civilization and happiness for one small world and then induce yourselves to believe that you are humanitarian intelligent beings! This kind of peace does not interest me in the least. It may interest Sar-sar. It may appeal to the Vagabond—but not to me. I will never keep silent, I will never be happy, until I see that salvation has been brought within the reach of the peoples of every planet in the Universe! The peace that I am advocating is the military disarmament of the nations of the inhabited Stars and the signing by all of them of a Pact of Eternal Friendship!

"Friends! I cannot definitely say on what platform you are standing, but I want to tell you that my platform is that of Freedom, Courage and Honesty. Peace without the individualization of these attributes will not be lasting. What benefit will peace bring to you and to your fellowmen if you cultivate by its side a civilization and a religion which exalt intellectual slavery, fear and dishonesty?

"I advise you then, let us make our worlds first and last the worlds of Freedom, Courage and Honesty. Let us for a time set aside the immediate, practical concerns of our spheres and planets, and dream with their inhabitants the dreams of Love, Beauty and Romance—then the Queen of Peace will come and sit on the throne of our hearts. Let us forget the self-centered human crabs who, belonging intellectually and spiritually to prehistoric ages, are incapable of furthering the progress of the humanities of the Stars!

"'Safety First' is most unheroic, most unprogressive! It appeals only to the old and the timid, who fear and dis-

trust the clamour of youth for change and progress. Only those who hail dangerous experiments, only those who impetuously go forward with a spirit of adventure and élan, can enroll themselves on the immortal register of peace-lovers and peace-makers.

"We, as the Letters of the First Word of Unity, we, as the Soldiers of the Army of Light, must under the guidance of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, bestir the minds and the souls of those who have had enough of lethargy and stagnation, and introduce into their lives the magnetism, the color, the music, the whir, the pageant and the ecstasy of the Stars!

"We must fill the hearts of the humanities of the planets with a firm resolution, that they may arise with one mighty effort and shake the foundations of the Heavens with the cry:

"We alone can conquer war!

"We alone can conquer hate!

"We alone can conquer death!"

Who could speak after Del Aram?

Who dared to exhibit the poverty of his ideas before the affluent richness of her treasures?

Who could soar higher and sing sweeter in the heavens of eloquence?

Who could reveal the mysteries of reality with a more profound understanding, a more sincere expression, a more illumined consciousness, a more penetrating insight?

No one could. No one can. No one ever will.

Inside the Peace Room all was mantled with a dynamic stillness. The light began to fade. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher rose and walked toward Del Aram, His

countenance radiant with the light of a new happiness. Gently, He took her hand and led her out through the door, and up the slope of the Mountain of Light. I looked from the window—it was a few minutes before sunset, and I saw the Star-Master and the Star-Pupil walking together among the flowers. My eyes followed them, and ere long they appeared standing on the summit, their animated faces gilded by the last fiery rays of the sun—as they conversed on immortal themes—afar off.

കേരളസാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി

THE ARRIVAL OF THE PROPHETS

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Chapter XVII

THE ARRIVAL OF THE PROPHETS

THE arrival of the Prophets of the far-flung spheres for the Commencement Day of the Universal University was a definite indication that our sojourn on the Supreme Star was fast drawing to a close. These spiritual leaders of the humanities of the inter-stellar Universe were Themselves graduates of the Universal University, which They regarded as the source of Their wisdom and the temple of Their initiation. They did not come alone, but each was attended by a group of His chosen disciples, and as company after company appeared from all parts of the sky, They greeted one another with joy and enthusiasm. They had attended the same School, been instructed in the same way, and learned the same lessons of spiritual statesmenship, and then They had returned to Their respective globes to spread the same ideals, to unfurl the same flag, to scatter the seeds of the same divine civilization and to prepare Their followers for the final unveiling of the same Universal Plan to which the whole creation moves. And now, ripened in wisdom, glorified by service and immortalized by truth, They were coming to attend the graduation exercises of other Students, destined to return to their worlds, to perform other deeds under new environments and surrounded by new conditions.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had appointed the First Word of Unity to welcome His former Students to

the Universal University. At ever shortening intervals, Nasseem and the other Messengers of the Sky brought us word that the various Prophets of Mars, Jupiter, Vega, Capella, Antares, Aldebaran, Betelgeuse, Canopus, Mercury, Neptune and many others, with Their disciples, had reached the frontiers of the Supreme Star, and we had to be ready at all moments to go forth and greet Them in the name of our blessed Teacher.

When Nasseem hurried in with the news that the Prophets of Venus were approaching, Del Aram could not contain her joy, and I, next to our own Prophets, longed most of all to behold the Saviours of the planet from which had come Del Aram, the Champion of Freedom. They fully justified my expectation, for They were a group of the most beautiful, of the most sensitive Souls that I could have imagined. Many were women. Del Aram knew all of Them, for she had read Their Writings and was familiar with Their stories, handed down through the ages. It was moving to witness the love and reverence with which she knelt before Them. Here I saw her as I had rarely seen her, as she worshipped in rapt humility the glorious Saviours of her race, Those on whose Teachings and Ideals she had fed her mind and soul. God had endowed the inhabitants of Venus with a large measure of His most adorable attribute—Beauty, and no sooner had They looked upon her face than They recognized her as being from Their world, because in all the Heavens there was none more beautiful than Del Aram.

When she had recovered from her first transport of emotion, she called me to her side, and I also fell on my knees before those living Temples of divine nobility.

I feared at first that they would not notice me, realizing

that compared to their own humanity I must have cut a very painful figure, but the Prophets of Venus, like those of other globes, were indulgent, and They looked at me with sin-covering eyes and spoke words of the greatest kindness.

Day after day, we were kept occupied in welcoming these heavenly Beings, these Suns of spirituality, these radiant Centers of intellectual energy, these mystical Fountains of truth, strength and beauty. Every minute, my mind throbbed with new ideas, my heart thrilled with new feelings, my eyes were enraptured by new visions of splendor. With the arrival of these celestial Saviours, the very atmosphere of the Supreme Star had become more vibrant, more luminous, more divine. By Their dynamic Presences, They introduced the already spiritual inhabitants of the City of the Heavens into a higher, into a more sublime world of reality, and made the humblest behold with his own eyes the Eternal Vision of Beatitude.

Here was a Parliament of the Prophets, a Congress of the Saviours, not of one planet alone, but of all the thousands of planets revolving in the measureless depths of space! Here was a magnificent Assemblage, defying description, a gathering together of the greatest spiritual guides and cosmic leaders that the spheres had produced in the slow process of their evolution through billions of cycles! I know that I could never live through another such spirit-shaking experience as that which I underwent during those days, for the piercing shafts of its joy would shatter my body into a thousand pieces, but its memory will stay with me forever, and I would not exchange it for the prospect of millions of future years—pregnant though they be with undreamed of glories.

As day by day Nasseem continued to announce the im-

pending arrivals, I became possessed with a mounting excitement, and when at last he came to inform us that the Earth's company of Prophets was at hand, I was on my way to greet Them before he had spoken a word. Long ere we had reached Their circle, the atmosphere shone with the light of Their countenances, and when we stood before Them, we were submerged in an ocean of divine refulgence.

The contingent of Prophets and spiritual rulers of the Earth was quite large and the various phases of its history were well represented. It is superfluous to remark that They were other than one glad, united, harmonious company. They were like brothers of one family. They knew each other well and dealt with one another in a spirit of true equality and freedom, born of deep-rooted spiritual regard. During the succeeding days, I came to notice among Them a union of thought, a harmony of purpose, an identity of interest and a sincere comradeship, and realized that They were made out of the same substance, breathed the same spirit and had been nurtured in the arms of the same Parent.

It did not take me long to introduce myself as the Student from the Earth, and soon I was the cynosure of Their attention and interest. They made all manner of inquiries concerning the condition of Their followers, the progress of Their Messages and the development of Their civilizations. The voices which asked these questions were unutterably sad, and I realized that They were fully aware of the state of inharmony, enmity and hatred which existed among Their so-called adherents. They sorrowed because Their world was still rocked in the cradle of prejudice and rivalry, and I was shamed and humiliated

at being unable to present to Them a report which would have gladdened Their hearts.

It was a daily miracle to observe the Saviours of all the Universe gathered together and conversing with one another with perfect understanding. None felt a stranger in that company and no introduction was ever needed.

One day, I was conversing with John, the Beloved Disciple of Christ. He was a beautiful soul, so simple, so full of love for his Master, so divinely human. He said to me:

"See how my Lord loves all the other Prophets of the Earth! There is no separation and differentiation between Them *in Heaven*. They are the stars of one firmament and the flowers of one garden. Why is it that the people of the Earth do not practice the lesson of Love, when my Master came to teach them this very lesson? Why is it that His own followers are so divided, so scattered, like a flock without a shepherd? Do they think that Jesus brought to them a message of hatred, war and carnage? He gave them nothing but the Law of Love, yet, alas, they soon forgot this simple lesson, and replaced it with a fabric of creeds woven out of their own imaginations, the burden of which has crushed their souls and bent their backs. Why do they not study His Teachings? Why do they wrangle over dogmas and neglect reality? Jesus did not sacrifice His life that the priests might fatten their bellies nor that the people might glorify His name, while their hearts are full of vipers of hypocrisy. He died on the cross that the Religion of Love might be acknowledged by all men, that One God might be worshipped throughout the length and breadth of the world, that all nations might dwell together

in His Father's house and praise the glory of His Father's Kingdom. But alas, alas, a thousand times alas!"

When the Prophets from every quarter of the Universe had arrived, They were received by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher in the Paradise of Flowers. This was the supreme moment. Detachment after detachment, group after group, these ministers plenipotentiary and envoys extraordinary, these ambassadors and trusted messengers, sent to all the countries of the sky, were now returning to the Capitol of the Spirit. Each of them, accompanied by a group of His chosen followers and apostles came dressed in the costume of the period in which He had lived and of the people whom he had taught.

Tte Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher greeted Them one by one. He knew Them well by name and by appearance. This Jubilee of Light was undoubtedly an occasion which had never been equalled in the history of the Universe, and the vibration of its concentrated power must have been felt throughout all phases of life in the contingent worlds.

From time immemorial, at these periodical reunions, the major Prophets of the different Stars had been accustomed to address the Students in the open Amphitheatre.

Inasmuch as this year the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had decided to visit the Earth, there was a persistent and sincere demand to hear the Lessons which had been given to that world. Our Prophets were Themselves overjoyed at the exhilarating promise, which brought the hope that Their countries would at last be united and the various systems of religion welded together, and the Saviours of the other Stars, joining in the general enthusiasm, requested that the time to be disposed of, be devoted exclusively to

the Prophets of Kesh-makesh for the full exposition of their Messages.

So it came about in this most natural manner that the Teachings which had been revealed to the Earth were repeated before the chosen Students of the Universe. One by one, night after night, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher introduced with words of affection and tenderness the Manifestations of Celestial Beneficence which God had sent to His people. In the hushed silence of the Amphitheatre, thousands upon thousands listened to the masterpieces of spiritual ideals which They had disclosed, and as these glorious vistas were unrolled before us, Del Aram and I were struck by the unanimity of Their principles, and the fundamental identity of Their Truths. All voiced the same Reality and gave utterance to the same underlying Spirit. Their Doctrines were like the strings of the harp, each of which gives forth a peculiar note of its own, while the harmonious blending of all produces a symphony of music. And we knew that even as the seven primary colors of the prism when merged become a ray of pure white light, so the Religions of these great Saviours, each with its individual color, were destined to be merged at last by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher into the pure white light of Universal Religion.

So as not to leave you in an atmosphere of glittering generalities, and in order to preserve for the future a concrete picture of what transpired, I will here give a record which, with the fortunate assistance of Del Aram, I was able to make at the time. She sat beside me with unswerving attention, and at moments when I was so deeply moved at seeing before my eyes the Prophets of our Earth presenting their dynamic Messages at the Court of the Heavens

that I was carried into a state of ecstasy, she took down whole passages which I would otherwise have lost.

I have always realized the limitations of the written message, for experience has taught me the profound truth that what we call the "message" is not in the written word but in the spirit and voice of the messenger.

And so I hope that as you read these divine sayings of the Prophets of the Earth, you will vivify them with Their spirit, which is hidden behind the veil of your material body. And let this also be understood, that each of the Eight Divine Sermons presented here has its dominant note, its distinctive feature, a principle that differentiates one from all the rest, the several melodies constituting, when blended, a symphony of the Kingdom of Heaven, destined to be played in the hearts of the children of the Stars.

Messengers	*Messages*
Brahma	The Divine Presence pervading Nature
Buddha	Renunciation
Zoroaster	Purity
Confucius	Reverence for the Past and Filial Piety
Lao-tzu	The Path of Truth
Moses	Righteousness
Christ	Love
Mohammad	Submission

THE MESSAGES OF BRAHMA, BUDDHA, ZARATHUSTRA, CONFUCIUS

കേരളസാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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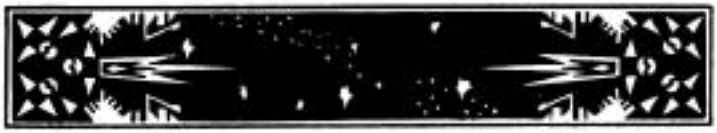

Chapter XVIII

THE MESSAGES OF BRAHMA, BUDDHA, ZARATHUSTRA, CONFUCIUS

THE Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher introduced Brahma to the Students of the Supreme Star and to the Prophets of the Universe, and from the platform of the Amphitheatre of the City of the Heavens, Brahma, the Creator, the Self-subsistent, the Intelligence that produced the Visible Universe, spoke thus:

"Hear ye, children of immortal bliss! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. Alone through knowing Him, shall you be saved from death. The Ancient One is the eternal Spirit; for Spirit was never born; the spirit shall never cease to be; never was time it was not; end and beginning are dreams. Birthless, and deathless and changeless, remains the Spirit for ever; death has not touched it at all, death though the house of it seems . . .

"And he who worships this All-Highest within him, pride flees from his heart, even as the light of the lamp before the rays of the sun. He whose heart is pure and in whom there is no pride, he who is humble, constant and simple, who looks upon every man as upon his friend and loves every soul as his own, he who treats every creature with equal tenderness and love, he who would do good and has

abandoned vanity—in his heart dwells the Lord of Life. Even as the Earth is adorned with beautiful plants, which she brings forth, even so is he adorned in whose soul dwells the Lord of Life. . .

"Be master of your thoughts if you would attain unto your purpose. Fix the glance of your soul upon the one pure Light, which is within you, and which is free from passion. For just as the candle cannot burn without a flame, man cannot live without a spiritual life. The deathless Spirit, the Ancient One dwells in all nature and in all men, but not all men are aware of it.

"The Eternal Principle is within you. It is all that which is life, all that which is truth and all that which you need to know. Be ever brave and sincere, then follow any path with devotion, and you will reach the Whole. Develop all your faculties. The more faculties you develop within yourself, the more souls you have, and you can see the Universe only through *all* the souls. Say: 'I am the Infinite!' and fear will die. Be ready to change any minute, then can you see the Truth. The greatest sin is to think yourself weak. No one is greater! You are beyond the sun, the stars, the Universe. I have come to teach you the Godhead of man, and the identity of your soul with that of mine. Deny evil, and create none. You have forged the chain, and you alone can break it.

"No law can ever make you free. You *are* free! Nothing can give you freedom, if you have not it already . . . You are the greatest book that ever was or ever will be, the infinite depository of all that is. Until the inner teacher opens, all outside teaching is vain. . .

"The inner book teaches you broad-mindedness, a generous, hospitable attitude toward those religions different from

your own. Altar flowers are of many kinds, but worship is one. Systems of faith differ, but God is One. The aim of all religions is the same. All seek the object of their love, and the whole world is love's dwelling place.

"To you I declare this holy mystery: There is nothing nobler than humanity.

"Therefore establish the Religion of Law, which benefits all the living beings in the Universe. It will bring supreme felicity to all the creatures in all the worlds. Temples and teachers teach a few, but the Teacher of teachers is One; His forms are many; the seasons are many, and innumerable are the manifestations of the One!

"I declare unto you this One, this Eternal Law, with all its secrets; it is known to the Wise as the old doctrine, beneficial to all, the doctrine of Love. It means a manner of life completely harmless to all beings. In accordance with this law have I lived, and I pray that all the creatures may fulfill it in their lives.

"He who is a friend of all men and rejoices in the well-being of all, in thought, word and deed, he knows the Law, the Moral Law. And he who fears no being and is feared by none, he becomes united with Brahma.

"And now let me teach you the Golden Rule: *The true way to Life is to do by the things of others as you do by your own.*"

On the second evening, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher presented Buddha, the Awakened One, the Lord, the Perfect, The Buddha, the Siddhartha Gautama, the Prince of the Warrior Caste, the Tathagata, the Fortunate, the Illumined Sakayamuni, the Compassionate, the Merciful, He who lived the pure life of brotherhood, He whose wonder-

ful eloquence, powerful magnetism and glorious personality won to Him kings and subjects alike. He who taught universal love and daring self-reliance, arose in the Assemblage of the Supreme Star, and as He stood, there shone about Him a halo of serenity which diffused its rays to all parts of the Amphitheatre. He spoke with a gentleness and sweetness which won all the hearts:

"O ye Brethren of the Yellow Robes! Through my own effort have I attained enlightenment and solved the mysteries of birth, suffering, old age and death. With the pure, spotless Eye of Truth, I looked upon these evils and conquered all. I have escaped the continual rotation of birth and rebirth and have climbed the Mountain of Deliverance—Nirvana. From the passionless, desireless, deathless summit of Nirvana, I advise you: Be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a haven unto yourselves. Embark on an eternal voyage. Hold fast to the truth as a lamp. Avoid dogmatic theorizing, which is a jungle, a wilderness, a puppet show! Look not for refuge to any beside yourselves. Learn ye that knowledge which I have attained myself and have declared unto you. Walk ye in it, and rest assured of this fact, that not even a God can change into defeat the victory of a man who has vanquished himself.

"O, ye Brethren of the Yellow Robes! You have asked me who is the Tathagata? The Tathagata, brethren, is the one who causes a Way to appear which has not appeared before; who does bring a Way not brought about before; who does proclaim a Way not proclaimed before; who is the Knower of the Way, who understands the Way, who is skilled in the Way. And, brethren, His disciples are the Wayfarers who follow after Him.

"I am only a Way-Shower! You, as the Wayfarers, must

walk in the Way by your own choice and decision. No one can make that decision for you.

"By ourselves is evil done.
"By ourselves is pain endured.
"By ourselves we cease from wrong.
"By ourselves become we pure.
"No one saves us but ourselves.
"No one can and no one may.
"We ourselves must walk the Path.
"The Way-Showers merely show the Way.

"O ye way-farers in the path of Tathagata! Listen to the beatitudes of the Buddha and deliver them to mankind:

"Not to serve the foolish, but to serve the wise;
To honour those worthy of honour—this is the greatest blessing.

"Much insight and education, self-control and pleasant speech,
And every word well-spoken—this is the greatest blessing.

"To live righteously, to give help to one's fellowmen,
To follow a peaceful calling—this is the greatest blessing.

"To be long-suffering and meek, to abhor evil and to cease from it,
Not to weary in well-doing—this is the greatest blessing.

"To be gentle, to be patient under reproof,
To be charitable, to act virtuously—this is the greatest blessing.

"Reverence and humility, contentment and gratitude,

To be pure, to be temperate—this is the greatest blessing.
"To dwell in a pleasant land with right desires in the heart,
To bear the remembrance of good deeds—this is the greatest blessing.
"Beneath the stroke of life's changes, the mind that shaketh not,
Without grief and passion—this is the greatest blessing.
"On every side invincible are those who act like these.
On every side they walk in safety—and theirs is the greatest blessing.

"Who indeed crosses Maya?

"He who gives up even the Vedas and attains to unfaltering love—he crosses, indeed—he crosses, and helps others to cross.

"Those worshippers who have this one object in life are the greatest. Among them there is no distinction of caste, learning, wealth or occupation—because they are His.

"In all times, past, present and future, Love is the greatest thing. He who believes and reveres this, becomes possesed of Love, and he gains That Dearest. And because he has pity for every living creature, therefore he will be called Holy.

"O ye celestial Arahats! I have found the Truth—the Four Noble Truths, the observance of which will lead you to the Noble Eightfold Path. I have discovered the Noble Truth about Suffering, the Noble Truth about the Cause of Suffering, the Noble Truth about the cessation of Suffering and the Noble Truth about the path which leads to the Cessation of Suffering. Cessation of Suffer-

ing is realized by walking in the Noble Eightfold Path: Right View, Right Aspirations, Right Speech, Right Actions, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindedness and Right Meditation.

"Know ye this Truth: That hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases by love. If one man conquer in battle a thousand times a thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greater conqueror. Speak harshly to no one. Let a man overcome anger by love; let him overcome evil by good; let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth. Speak always the truth. Do not yield to anger. Give, if you are asked, for the little you have. By these steps will you approach the throne of the gods!

"Let the love which fills the mother's heart as she watches over an only child, let even such love animate you. You can only reach the immortal path of Nirvana by continuous acts of kindness, and must perfect your souls through compassion and charity, for charity roots out the love of self.

"O ye sacred priests of the Temple of Dhamma! Keep your hearts filled with affectionate and tender love. Sit quietly and call deliberately to mind all those things who are close to the spot where you are, and suffer them with a feeling of love. Think especially of those with whom you have had disagreement, and send Love toward them. Continue to extend your love to wider and ever wider circles. Then let your mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, and so the second quarter, and so the third, and so the fourth, and thus the whole wide Universe, above, below, around and everywhere.

"Today I proclaim to you this truth: The root of religion

is to reverence one's own faith and never to revile the faith of others. My doctrine makes no distinction between high and low, rich and poor. It is like the sky. It has room for all, and like water it washes all alike.

"The Golden rule of Sangha which I teach unto you is this: *One should seek for others the happiness one desires for one's self.*"

On the third night, the Amphitheatre of the Supreme Star was the scene for the Sermon of the divine Zarathustra, the Prophet of Ahura Mazda. Long before the appointed time, the surrounding slopes were covered with an eager throng of men and women, for wide has been the fame of this "Excellent Singer of Gathas," the Teacher of the Aryan race, the Proclaimer of the sacredness of Light and Work, the Prophet of Optimism. The Spirit of the World's Teacher in introducing Him, told us that the Great Message of Zarathustra was that we were all the children of God and that by birthright we belonged to the Kingdom of the Good; that we were created as free moral agents, and therefore had the liberty of choosing between Good and Evil. Ours was the obligation of choosing the Good Life. Ahura Mazda had sent Zarathustra as a guide to help us in that choice and to make us realize that God desired the victory of the Good, and expected each soul to do physical and moral work as a co-operator with Him in the gigantic, age-long task of redeeming the Universe. The Message of Zarathustra must bring to the consciousness of the Students of the Stars the fact that the highest inspiration in the conducting of life is the thought that we are co-operators with Ahura Mazda in the battle against Evil and in the triumph of Good.

Then arose the majestic figure of the Patriarch-Prophet of Persia, and thus delivered His Message:

"My Soldiers of Light! In the beginning there were two principles, the Good and the Evil. Side with one of these. To both ye cannot belong. Choose ye to be Good and not Evil. Splendid things are garnered up for residence in the Good Mind. Wisdom is the shelter from lies. The prudent man, therefore, wishes to be only where wisdom dwells. Turn not away from the three best things: Right Thoughts, Right Words, Right Actions. These are the leaders of Purity, and he who knows Purity knows Ahura Mazda.

"In whom does the Lord rejoice? In him who adorns the earth with grain and grass and fruit trees, who dries up the moist lands and waters dry places. He who tills the soil is as good a servant of religion as he who offers ten thousand prayers. Therefore indulge not in slothful sleep, lest the good work which needs to be done remain undone. Who is the holy man? He is the holy man who has built him a home in which are wife and children and the sacred fire. Whosoever cultivates barley, cultivates virtue. When the wheat appears the demons hiss and when the grain is ripe they flee in rage and despair.

"Trust your souls to Heaven and teach that which is pure. Keep forever before you Purity and Right-Mindedness. He who knows Purity knows Ahura Mazda. To such is He father, brother and friend. . . In the mines of the world gleam the gems and the earth has its green vesture, but deep within you the divine Harmony is born, singing the praises of Ahura Mazda with the revolving spheres—praises offered to the fairest and the best. . .

Show compassion to the wicked, for the virtuous have been already blessed by Ahura Mazda, in being virtuous. . . I have been told that diversity of worship has divided human kind on Earth and that innumerable sects have been founded. When you visit that globe, from all their doctrines select one and teach it—Divine Love. For all human knowledge and art combined can only spell the first letter of His Love. The infinite Universe would have been an empty tablet had He not written thereon His eternal Thoughts in glowing colors.

"When you start on your pilgrimages back to your respective worlds, attract unto yourselves whatsoever hearts you can, for know this well—a hundred holy temples have not the value of one heart. And especially you Earth-bent ones, who will have to fight constantly against Evil, moral and physical, outward and inward, be not afraid of Death, and rest assured that radiant Spirits will lead you across the bridge into the Paradise of Eternal Happiness.

"On this journey ahead of you, you will need no rosary, for the threads of your lives will be strung with the beads of love and service. And do not forget to teach men that the best way to worship their Heavenly Father is in allaying the distress of the times and in improving the conditions of their fellows.

"All good thoughts, good words, and good deeds originate in the celestial worlds. Therefore seek these Truths through inner illumination. Look for the reality of the stars in the heavens and not on the surface of the lake. Knowing this, you will realize that true greatness, whether in spiritual or in worldy matters, does not shrink from minute details, but regards their performance as acts of divine worship.

"The liberal man who feasts and bestows is better than the pious who fasts and hoards . . . Never allow yourselves, while on Earth or on any other world, to be carried away by anger. Angry words and scornful looks are sins. Reply to your enemies with gentleness. . . Opposition to Peace is sin. . . Always meet petulance with serenity and perversity with kindness. . . He who is indifferent to the welfare of others does not deserve to be called a man. . . That which you believe to be right, first practice, then declare. . . Think perfect thoughts, speak perfect words, do perfect deeds.

"Someone asked me: 'What is Hell and what is Heaven?' Hell is but the fire of the useless troubles with which we worry ourselves. Heaven is the Kingdom of spiritual repose, love and peace. Hell, Purgatory and Heaven—they are all within yourselves!

"And when you stand in the spiritual congregations of your people, ask them: 'Have the religions of mankind no common ground? Is there not everywhere the same enrapturing beauty, beaming forth from many thousand places? Broad indeed is the carpet which God has spread and many are the colors which He has given it. There is but One Lamp in His House, in the rays of which wherever we look, a bright assemblage meets us. Whatever road we take joins the high-road that leads to Him. His Names are manifested in the nature of man. His knowledge reveals itself in the science of His Prophets. His Bounty appears in the bounty of great hearts. The Universe is His mirror and we recognize His traces on its surface!

"Did you ask me for the Golden Rule of Ahura Mazda? It is this: '*Do as you would be done by*'."

In introducing Kung-Fu-tze, the Spirit of the Worlds'

Teacher stated that He was the Master of China and the Sponsor of Wisdom, for He had said: "When you know a thing, declare that you know it. And when you do not, admit the fact—this is wisdom." Through the influence of Confucius, there had been maintained in China a deep reverence for parents, family affection and love of order and moderation. The most conspicuous trait of His character was intellectual humility and sincerity. He was an inexhaustible fountain of ethical principles and moral philosophy, an inspirer of the highest type, yet divinely human. He was the legislator and 'the Uncrowned King of His People.' He was merged in the race-consciousness as an ever-living God who guided their civilization, and transmitted their ancient knowledge by teaching the fundamental principles of the sages. When a disciple asked Him, "What do you know about death?" He answered simply and plainly, "How do I understand death when I do not yet understand life?"

Then appeared in the Amphitheatre of the Supreme Star, Confucius, and addressed the throng of the heavenly hosts:

"My comrades of the Stars! I come to speak to you of the life of the moral man. The life of the moral man is plain and yet not unattractive. It is simple and yet full of grace. It is methodical and yet easy. He knows that the accomplishment of great things consists in doing small things well. He knows that great effects are produced by small causes. He knows the evidence and reality of that which may not be apprehended by the senses. Thus is he enabled to enter into the world of ideas and morals. A man who is foolish and yet fond of using his own judgment, who is in humble circumstances, and yet inclined to assume authority, who, while living in the present age, reverts to

the ways of antiquity—such a man is one who will bring calamity upon himself.

"The power of spiritual forces in the Universe—how active it is everywhere! Invisible to the eyes and impalpable to the senses, it is inherent in all things and nothing can escape its operation. Like the rush of mighty waters, the presence of unseen Powers is felt, sometimes above us, sometimes around us. The ordinance of God is that which we call the law of our being. To fulfill the law of our being is that which we call the moral law. The moral law, when reduced to a system, is that which we call religion.

"The moral laws form one system with the laws by which the seasons succeed each other and the sun and moon appear with the alternations of day and night. This system of laws is the same as that by which all created things are produced and develop themselves, each in its order; by which the functions of nature take their courses without conflict or confusion, the lesser forces flowing everywhere like river currents, while the great forces of creation move silently and steadily on. It is this—One System running through all that makes the Universe so impressively great.

"It is only the man with the most perfect nature who is able to combine in himself quickness of apprehension, intelligence, insight and understanding—qualities necessary for the exercise of command; magnanimity, generosity, benignity, and gentleness—qualities necessary for the exercise of patience; originalty, energy, strength of character and determination—qualities necessary for the exercise of endurance; dignity, noble seriousness, and regularity—qualities necessary for the exercise of self-respect; grace, meth-

od, delicacy and lucidity—qualities necessary for the exercise of critical judgment.

"All-embracing and vast is the nature of such a man. Profound it is and inexhaustible, like a living spring of water, ever overflowing with life and vitality. All-embracing and vast, it is like the heavens. Profound and inexhaustible, it is like the abyss.

"When such a man shall have made his appearance in the world, all people will learn to reverence him. Whatsoever he has said, all people will learn to believe. Whatsoever he has done, all people will learn to appreciate. Thus his fame will spread over the civilized world, extending even to the savage countries. Wheresoever ships and carriages reach; wheresoever the labor and enterprise of man penetrate; wheresoever the heavens overshadow and the ever he has said, all people will learn to believe. Whatso- ever frost and dew fall, all who have life and breath will honor him. Therefore I say: He is the equal of God!

"Such a man recognizes and practices the Five Relations of man to man. 1. Sovereign and Subject. 2. Husband and Wife. 3. Parent and Child. 4. Elder and Junior Children. 5. Friend and Friend. Such a man will also teach an act according to the five Cardinal Virtues—Justice, Generosity, Truthfulness, Humility, and Propriety. Such a man will uphold the ideals that rulers should be benevolent and subjects loyal; husbands affectionate and wives devoted; parents wise and children obedient; brothers and sisters mutually attracted, and friend faithful to friend. Such a man will insist that these various relations of life be governed by the same order and serenity as that which we observe in the solar and inter-solar systems and in the daily drama

of natural phenomena. Such a man will place before himself the Seven Rules for inward and outward improvement—the Investigation of Things, the Completion of Knowledge, the Sincerity of Thought and Action, the Rectification of the Heart, the Cultivation of Personality, the Regulation of the Family and the Progress of the Government.

"Within the four seas all are brothers, and the ultimate cause of disorder in the world is the lack of mutual love. If throughout the Earth all rulers and their ministers were actuated by mutual love, their relationships would be characterized by consideration and loyalty; if fathers and sons loved each other, their relationships would be characterized by compassion and filial regard; if brothers loved each other, harmony would prevail. If throughout the world all men lived in love, the strong would not oppress the weak, the numerous would not rob the few, and the rich would not despise the poor. Therefore the aim of the charitable man must be to promote all that which makes for the welfare of the world and to remove all that which is harmful to it. I believe that the practice of the principle of Universal Love and Co-operation for the common good is like fire flaming upwards or water flowing downwards, fulfilling their own nature— so that nothing on Earth can stop them.

"And now, O ye starry friends, let me present to you a few of the maxims of the Sages: Three things the moral man greatly reveres—the ordinances of Heaven, great men and the words of the wise. Possess good qualities yourself and then you may expect them from others. Before you can blame others, you must be free from fault yourself. The perfect man loves all men. He is not governed by pri-

vate interest, but considers the public good. For without virtue, both wealth and fame are like passing clouds. Not to speak when you should is cowardly concealment. Sincerity is the way to Heaven, and the practice of sincerity should be the way of man. Be not concerned that you have no position; be concerned with how you shall fit yourself for one. Be not concerned at being unknown; seek to be worthy of being known. The real fault is to have faults and not to try to amend them. When you see a good man, think to emulate him; when you see a bad man, examine your own heart.

"Man without divine assistance cannot advance an inch. In a united family happiness springs up of itself. Kindness is greater than law. Guide the blind over the bridge. God loves all men. Better do a kindness near home than go far to burn incense. To save one life is better than to build a seven-story pagoda. Injure others—injure yourself. Better die than turn your back to reason. Doubt and distraction are on Earth; the brightness of truth in Heaven. Do not love idleness and hate labor. Do not be diligent in the beginning and in the end lazy. If there be no faith in our words, of what use are they? The man of worth is really great without being proud; the mean man is proud without being really great.

"If a man wish to attain to the excellence of superior beings, let him first cultivate the virtues of humanity; for if not perfect in human virtue, how shall he reach immortal perfection?

"Prudence will carry a man all over the world, but the impetuous find every step difficult.

"A single conversation across the table with a wise man is better than ten years' study of books.

Message of Confucius

"The perfect Man knows that religions are many and different, but that Reason is one. The broad-minded see the truth in different religions; the narrow-minded see only the differences.

"Heaven graciously bestowed upon us the Golden Rule: *What you would not wish done to yourself do not unto others.*"

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THE MESSAGES OF LAO-TZU, MOSES, MOHAMMAD

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Chapter XIX

THE MESSAGES OF LAO-TZU, MOSES, MOHAMMAD

ON the fifth night, the Amphitheatre billowed with radiant faces, and the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher introduced Lao-Tzu, the "Old Philosopher," the Prophet of Active Passivity and the Teacher of Abstract Ideas. He told us that the aim of Lao-Tzu was to teach men to walk in the path of Tao—the Way of Spiritual Reason, and to develop inner purity of soul. Spirituality, He taught, must be the basis of a model state; for rules are of little avail if the heart be not responsive and receptive. Let the Perfect Ideal be present from moment to moment in each human consciousness, and it will prove efficacious as a deterrent from wrong-doing and as an incentive to true thought, speech and action. Therefore, the method of Lao-Tzu was subjective education. He enjoined men to guide their lives by the spiritual laws within themselves and in nature. These laws prompt now action, now inaction, now receptivity and now productivity. Consequently, Lao-Tzu's Religion was no other than an interpretation of Nature's and of man's ethical relation to the Eternal Spirit.

Lao-Tzu came forward, and without any preliminary remarks, said:

"Advance in all that is in harmony with good; retreat

from all that is opposed to it. Accumulate virtue and store up merit; that all with gentleness; be loyal and dutiful; be upright yourselves, in order that you may reform others; compassionate the fatherless and the widowed; reverence the aged, cherish the young; do not injure even the little insects, the grass, or the trees. Pity the wickedness of others and rejoice in their good qualities. Succor them in their distress and rescue them when in danger. When a man gains his desires, let it be as though his good fortune were your own; when one suffers loss, as though you suffered it yourself. Never publish the failings of another, nor make a parade of your own merits. Put an end to evil, and afford every encouragement to good. Be not grasping, but learn to content yourself with little. When you are reviled, cherish no resentment; when you receive favors, do so as though deprecating your deserts. Be kind and generous without seeking return, and never regret anything that you have given to others. This is to be a good man, whom Heaven will guard, whom all will respect, whom blessings and honor will accompany, whom no evil will touch, and whom all good merits will defend.

"Temper your sharpness, disentangle your ideas, moderate your brilliance, live in harmony with your age. Then shall you be alike impervious to favor or disgrace, to benefit or injury, to honor or contempt, and shall therefore be esteemed above all mankind.

"He who knows others is clever, but he who knows himself is enlightened. He who overcomes others is strong, but he who overcomes himself is mightier still. He is rich who knows when he has enough and he who acts with energy has strength of purpose.

"If you would contract, you must first expand. If you

would weaken, you must first strengthen. If you would overthrow, you must first raise up. If you would take, you must first give. This is called the Dawn of Intelligence.

"The Sage does not care to hoard. The more he spends in the service of others, the more he possesses. The more he gives to his fellowmen, the more has he of his own.

"Keep behind, and you shall be placed in front. Keep outside, and you shall be brought in. When you have achieved merit, take it not to yourself; for if you do not take it to yourself, it shall never be taken away from you.

"He who humbles himself shall be preserved entire. He who bends shall be made straight. He who is empty shall be filled. He who is worn out shall be renewed. He who has little shall succeed. He who, conscious of being strong, is content to be weak—shall be the paragon of mankind. He who, conscious of his own light, is content to be obscure, he shall be the whole world's model. He who is great must make humility his base. He who is high must make lowliness his foundation.

"Weapons, even though successful, are unblessed implements, detestable to every creature. Therefore he who has the Eternal will not employ them.

"How does the Sage seat himself? The Sage holds the sun and the moon and the Universe in his grasp. He blends everything into one harmonious whole, rejecting the confusion of this and that. The knowledge of a man of Tao transcends the sense, by virtue of which his heart expands to enfold all those who come to take refuge therein. He will bury gold in the hillside and cast pearls into the sea. He will not strive for wealth nor fight for fame. He will not fear early death nor crave a long life. He will not take pride in success nor feel shame in failure. By

gaining a throne he is not enriched, nor can a world-wide empire give him glory. His glory is to know that all things are One, and life and death but phases of the same existence.

"The Sage is the greatest conqueror, for he has overcome his enemies without strife.

"Keep these three precious things: the first, gentleness; the second, frugality; the third, humility. Be gentle and you can be bold. Be frugal, and you can be liberal. Avoid putting yourself before others, and you can become a leader among men. For those whom Heaven would save, it fences around with gentleness.

"Do not confine the people within narrow bounds. Do not make their lives weary, for if you do not weary them of life, they will not then weary of you.

"The excellence of a dwelling is its site; the excellence of a mind is its profundity; the excellence of giving is its charitableness; the excellence of speech is its faithfulness; the excellence of action is ability, and the excellence of movement is timeliness.

"Be square without being angular. Be honest without being mean. Be upright without being punctilious. Be brilliant without being showy. Good words shall gain you honor in the market-place, but good deeds shall gain you friends among men.

"By many words is wit exhausted. To know, but to be as not knowing is the height of wisdom. Not to know and yet to affect knowledge is a vice. . . .

"In the management of affairs, people constantly break down just as they are nearing a successful issue. If they took as much care at the end as at the beginning, they would not fail in their enterprise.

"The difficult things of the world must once have been easy; the great things of the world must once have been small. Then set about difficult things while they are still easy; do great things while they are yet small.

"To the good I would be good, that they may be better. To the not-good I would also be good, that they may be good.

"With the faithful I would keep faith, in order that they may increase their faithfulness; with the unfaithful I would also keep faith, in order that they may become faithful. Even if a man be bad, how can it be right to cast him off?

"And this is the Golden Rule of Tao: *Recompense injury with kindness.*"

Came the sixth night and the hour of Moses, the Interlocutor, the Saviour of Israel. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher referred briefly to the Semitic race and its inspired Leader—He who brought the Hebrews out of the bondage of slavery into the Land of Promise, the land flowing with milk and honey, He who gave them a kingdom with kings and a Book that became the foundation of the civilization of a considerable portion of the Earth.

Then Moses, the most commanding and dramatic figure of the Sacred Scriptures of Judaism, the Father of Hebrew Liberty, the divine Author of Hebrew Legislation, the Framer of the Decalogue, arose in the Hall of the Heavens and spoke thus:

"Who are those who dare to sojourn in the Tent of Jehovah? Those who are to dwell on the Holy Mountain? They are those who live a life of blamelessness, and practice righteousness, and speak from their hearts that which

is true; those who utter no slander with their tongues; those who do no wrong to others; those who do not calumniate their neighbours; those who despise pompous arrogance and respect the god-fearing, and those who keep their pledges when given to a neighbour. Those who walk in this path can never be shaken. The righteousness of the perfect shall direct their way.

"He that is steadfast in righteousness shall attain unto life. Righteousness exalteth a nation. He that followeth after righteousness and mercy findeth life and honor. The path of the righteous is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

"Do not come before Jehovah, in this day, with burnt-offerings nor with rivers of oil. Jehovah hath shown you what is good and He requires of you naught but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk in humility before your God.

"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: This is the Day in which the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and a little child shall lead them. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy Mountain, for the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

"Do not glory in riches nor in power, but in understanding and knowing God, for He is the Lord that exerciseth loving-kindness and righteousness on the Earth. In these things the Lord delighteth.

"Speak always the truth; be modest; live on the coarsest fare rather than be dependent on others; rejoice not when thine enemy falleth; be not both witness and judge. Avoid anger—the heritage of the fool.

"No crown surpasseth humility, no monument a good name, no gain the performance of duty. The good man

leadeth others in the right path, loveth his neighbor, giveth his charity in secret, doeth right from pure motives and for the sake of God. He indulgeth in no idle talk. He is reviled, yet answereth not. He shuteth his eyes against all envy save that excited by another's virtue. He maketh the righteous his example, and deceiveth no one by word or by deed.

"Serve not thy Maker because thou hopest for Paradise, but from pure love of Him and His commands. Give thy life for His service, like a soldier in battle. Deceive no one; quarrel with no one, whatever his creed. On him that oppresseth the poor or buyeth stolen goods, no blessing shall rest. On those that clip the coin, on usurers, on such as have false weights and measures or are in any wise dishonest in business, there is no blessing. The worst failing is ingratitude, it must not be shown even unto the brute. More guilty even than those who are cruel to animals are employers who ill-treat their servants. Pay thy debt before thou givest alms. If one hath cheated or injured thee, let not revenge tempt thee to do the same unto him. Put no one to blush in public. Misuse thy power against no one.

"Let it be known that Wisdom is the breath of the Power of God and that in all ages, entering into holy souls, she maketh them Friends of God and Prophets.

"The Golden Rule proclaimed by Jehovah, the Lord of Lords, is this: *Whatsoever you do not wish your neighbor to do to you do not unto him.*"

The Prophet of the Arabian Peninsula, where the streams of culture and of commerce met in the Middle Ages, was the seventh Speaker. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher stated that we had gathered together to honor Mohammed, for He brought light to the souls of the Arabs, taught

them the worship of one God, delivered them from polytheism and lifted them to a high level of spiritual morality. As the First Lawgiver of Arabia, He established in their midst a new civilization and unfurled the flag of a New Life in the desert. He was ever called the "Ameen"—the Faithful of Allah. With His own hand, He lighted a lamp that illumined millions of homes and laid the foundation of a civilization that protected and watered the seeds of philosophy and science. He was the Revealer of El-Koran and the Awakener of the sleepy tribes of Arabia. He taught His people five "pillars" of Faith. 1. The daily repetition of—"There is no God but God." 2. Prayer. 3. Almsgiving. 4. Fasting. 5. Pilgrimage to Mecca. And His three commandments were: Total abstinence, Cleanliness and Humaneness.

Then Mohammad, the glorious Mouthpiece of Allah, stood up in the Paradise of the Faithful and spoke:

"In the Name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate, the Most Clement!

"Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the creatures! Him do we worship and of Him do we beg assistance. He directeth us in the right Path—the Path of those to whom He has been Gracious!

"The children of the All-Merciful One are those who walk humbly upon the earth and when they meet their fellowmen address them 'Peace be upon you!' There are those who say: 'None shall enter Paradise save those who accept my faith.' One religion says to another: 'Your faith rests on naught!' And the other replies: 'Your faith rests on naught!' But you say unto them: 'Whosoever resigns his will to the All-Wise One and is kind, he shall have favor,

no fear shall be on him.' Tell them: 'Whosoever is steadfast in reverence, in charity and in goodness, he sends treasures of joy onward to Paradise and he shall find them with the All-Merciful One.' There shall be no compulsion in religion. Whosoever follows that which he believes to be right has taken hold of the firm handle, of which there is no breaking off, for the All-Merciful One sees and knows. God requires nothng of any soul beyond his capacity. He catches us not up if we make mistakes. He loads us not with burdens beyond our strength, but ever has mercy on us, and loves us, and forgives us. Therefore let not hatred of any one induce you to do wrong, but act justly and love God, for God is fully acquainted with what you do.

"Go forth to all the worlds and proclaim the Gospel of Peace and Good-Will. Lead into the way of Light those who are wandering in darkness; bring happiness unto those who are sorrowful; teach love unto those who practice hatred. Tell them: 'The All-Merciful One has prepared for His people that which no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of any one conceived. Only Allah knows of the joy that awaits you as the fruit of your good deeds.

"The most favored of Allah are those who dwell continually in His Presence, who are satisfied with His approval and desire no reward. The joy of these will surpass that of those who work for personal compensation, even as the ocean surpasses the drop.

"For you who unselfishly do good, most excellent harvests are waiting. Neither darkness nor shame shall cover your faces, and you shall dwell in God's Paradise for ever. How think you the All-Merciful One will know you when you stand in His Presence? By your love for your fel-

lowmen in every station, as well as for your neighbor and your kin.

"Would you love your Creator? First love your fellow-beings; love all creatures; love in them that which you love in yourselves and reject in them only that which you reject in yourselves. Seek again him who spurns you; give unto him who takes away from you; pardon him who injures you, for the All-Merciful One desires that you cast in the depths of your souls the roots of His Perfections.

"God loves them who walk upon the earth softly; who, when they are reproached by their enemies, reply with serenity and self-control: 'Brother, peace be upon you.'

"Be faithful to every trust reposed on you. Take not vengeance one against the other, but practice kindness and forgiveness. Feed your servants with such food as you eat yourselves; clothe them with the stuff you wear; forgive their faults and treat them not with harshness.

"Those who reverence the All-Merciful One; who break not their compacts; who are constant amid trials; who secretly and openly share their possessions with those who eternal recompense. Angels shall come to them and say, are in need; who return good for evil: for all such is there 'Peace be upon you! Enter into felicity, return to the All-Merciful One, pleased and pleasing Him.'

"Know that all men are brothers one to another and that there is only One Brotherhood.

"Let all of you who are well-instructed, who are pure in life, go everywhere, teaching the Gospel of Truth, Peace and Good-Will. Preach that one hour of justice is better than seventy years of prayer. It is good to overcome evil with good; it is evil to resist evil with evil. Learning is given to promote good actions, not empty disputes. What-

ever is your religion, associate with those of other persuasions. Every good act is charity. Giving water to the thirsty is charity; removing stones and thorns from the road is charity; smiling in your brother's face is charity. Temperance is a tree which has contentment for its roots and peace for its fruit. Paradise lies at the feet of mothers. He who travels in search of knowledge, to him God shows the way to Heaven.

"To instruct yourself in science and art for one hour is more meritorious than attending the funerals of a thousand martyrs—even more meritorious than standing in prayer for a thousand years. God has treasuries beneath His Throne, the keys of which are the tongues of the poets. Acquire knowledge. He who seeks knowledge performs an act of piety. He who speaks of it praises Allah. Knowledge is the way to Heaven. It is our associate in the desert; our society in solitude; our companion when bereft of friends. It guides us to happiness. It is our adornment in the assemblage of mankind. With knowledge, the servant of God rises to the height of goodness and attains to a noble position. The ink of the scholar is more holy than the blood of the martyr. He who leaves his house in the search of knowledge walks in the path of Allah. The seeker of knowledge will be greeted in Heaven with a welcome from the Angels. He dies not who gives his life to science, for the greatest ornament of man is science.

"Be kind to your parents and your kindred, to orphans and to the poor, and to your neghbour, be he of your own people or be he a stranger. Speak to your parents with respectful speech, defer humbly to them out of reverence.

"A man's true wealth is the good he does while alive. When he dies, mortals will ask, what he has left behind;

but Angels will ask what good deeds he has sent before him.

"There is no better ruler than wisdom; no safer guardian than justice; no stronger sword than right; no surer ally than truth.

"And this is my last behest: Whatsoever be your religion, associate with men who think differently from you. All have a quarter of the Heavens to which they turn, and whichever way they turn—there is the Face of God.

"And the Golden Rule of Allah is this: *Let none of you treat a brother in a way he himself would dislike to be treated.*"

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THE MESSAGE OF THE CHRIST

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Chapter XX

THE MESSAGE OF THE CHRIST

AS the final Speaker of the Order of the Saviours of the Earth, the Christ was to teach the Students of the Stars. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had asked Him to appear last of all.

Between the Christ and the Spirit of the World's Teacher there existed a tender attachment. During these days, they had often been seen conversing with divine animation, as They walked together in the Paradise of Flowers.

The Amphitheatre of the Supreme Star was filled to its capacity, and the great throng of listeners extended over the hills upon all sides, further and further and further, until they were lost in the brilliancy of the Stars, twinkling over the distant horizons. It was a most expectant and reverent audience which had come to hear the Message of the Christ—one of the mightiest monarchs of the World—the Son of God, the Spirit of God, the Saviour of Mankind.

Silence!

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher arose and addressed the countless multitude:

"My children of the Stars! To-night we are here to offer our heartfelt homage to the Redeemer, the Annointed of the Lord, the Christ, One who was with us in ages past

and who has now returned, crowned with the diadem of spiritual victory and worshipped on Earth as the Light that shone in the darkness, though the darkness comprehended it not. While on Earth, He preached the morality of spirit. By His knowledge and His winning presence, He vitalized the loftiest spiritual conceptions of the people of that world and became a source of strength and inspiration to millions of souls. He developed, expanded and deepened the Law of Love. His was the ideal Message—the life of the spirit, the fusion of our life with the eternal Life of God. He gave definite significance to the humblest human being, teaching that there were infinite possibilities in every child of God. He stated that God's Love was unbounded, unrestrained, impartial. It was symbolized by the sunshine and the rain; given alike to the just and to the unjust. He wanted us to reproduce this Love in our experiences, that is, to love the unlovely, to love the unrighteous.

"He did not simply preach this Gospel. He lived it. He practiced what He preached, lived His Gospel of Love, made His own life His greatest Teaching. He taught that we must banish fear, negation and all sectarian beliefs and dogmas. He did not desire that we should waste our precious time with sacred trifles and solemn non-essentials. We should free our minds and spirits from the accumulated traditions of the ages, and live as the lillies of the field. He did not wish us to condemn nor to sow the seeds of suspicion and mistrust. No one should refer to a single soul by any name save one which is pleasing to God. This was the straight Path of the Christ.

"To be Christ-like, we must love those for whom we have felt little sympathy. A real follower of the Christ would declare: 'Never shall I accept individual salvation, but

rather shall I remain and strive and suffer until every soul from every Star has been brought to God. To the Christ, this Universe is full of Love. To Him, Love is the divine alchemy; Love is the positive force which mirrors all the joys of life. The Christ is here to tell us that we must impel our existence with the energy of Love; that the ocean of air in which we live is thrilled with the vibratons of Love; that without Love nothing exists. Love is the origin of all phenomena.

"Think Love, drink love, eat love, dream love—then your life will be beautiful, glorious, sublime, etherial. Live in the Paradise of Love. Soar in the crystalline air of Love. Swim in the shoreless sea of Love. Walk in the eternal rose-garden of Love. Perfume your nostrils with the sweet fragrance of the flowers of Love. Familiarize your ears with the soul-entrancing melodies of Love. Be intoxicated with the wine of Love. Let your ideals be a bouquet of Love, and your conversation the white pearls of the ocean of Love.

"Acquire love and more love—a love that melts all opposition; a love that sweeps all barriers; a love that abounds in charity, tolerance, large-heartedness, forgiveness and noble striving.

"The Christ tells each one of you to become a sign of Love, a center of Love, a haven of Love, a pearl of Love, a palace of Love, a mountain of Love, a world of Love, a universe of Love. Hast thou Love? Then thy power is irresistable. Hast thou sympathy? Then all the Stars will sing thy praise.

"The Christ declares—Love thou humanity in such a manner that when one meets thee he may cry out: 'Here comes the Kingdom of Heaven!'"

HERE COMES THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN—the Christ!

And seeing the multitudes who sat silently, and seeing His disciples and the Prophets of the Earth and those of other planets and the Students from the far-flung spheres, He opened His mouth and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the Children of God.

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

"Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted?

"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.

"You have heard that it hath been said of old: Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in Heaven; for He maketh

His sun to shine on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?

"Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

"God is a spirit and ye that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

"This is my commandment that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you:

"Honor all men. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God. There is no fear in Love, because fear hath torment, and he that feareth is not made perfect in Love. If a man say 'I love God' and hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also.

"God is not the God of the dead but the God of the living. Therefore shalt thou love thy Lord with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and all the prophets.

"Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even

Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven, and His righteousness, and all things shall be added unto you.

"Ask and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh shall it be opened.

"If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded upon a rock.

"And of a truth I perceive that God is no respector of persons, but in every nation he that revereth God, and doeth what is right is accepted of Him.

"Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.

"Are we not all children of one Father? Hath not one God created us?

"Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

Thus the Christ ended His divine discourse. He stood silent before the rapt and worshipful multitudes. With gentleness and compassion, He gazed into their transfigured faces and He knew He had carried them into the highest plane of spiritual illumination—the plane of self-realization. He had carried them into a Mansion of His Father's House, higher than the Supreme Star, higher than any Star that shone in the blue heavens—the plane of the union

of the lover and the beloved, where all sense of separation is lost and the single ray rises to join the sun, where the stream hastens to meet the sea, and the spark rushes toward the flame, and lo, the miracle of conversion is performed! The Worshipper adds his voice to the Worshipped—'I and my Father are One!'

The multitude realized that the Christ who now stood before them and looked tenderly into the recesses of their souls was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. In Him was Life and this life was the light of man. He was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. And as He stood before them, He revealed Himself to their spiritual eyes and gave them power to become sons and daughters of God—sons and daughters born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And they beheld His glory, and of the fulness of His grace they all received.

And as the Christ continued to gaze upon the multitude, a soft, transcendent light descended and enveloped Him. Its radius widened,—imperceptably it spread and spread and spread until, lo, every man and woman in that assemblage was brought within its circle! The light neither burned nor dazzled—it was tender, joyous, exhilarating—it warmed every atom of our beings and made us glad to be alive, to be on the Supreme Star and in the Presence of the Highest.

Then happened something marvellous and strange! The Christ knelt down, and the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, who had been standing by His side, knelt down, and there was a stir over the hushed and silent people and, with one accord, they all knelt down, and out of the soft, lambent light that had lifted the Christ into its bosom—where He

was standing as if betwixt the heavens and the earth—His glorious, clear, far-penetrating voice was raised in prayer:

"Our Father which art in Heaven,
"Hallowed be Thy Name!
"Thy Kingdom come.
"Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.
"Give us this day our daily bread.
"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.
"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever."

Spontaneously the multitude had joined in the prayer, and the vibrant voices of the Prophets and the Students of the shining globes were blended together into one mighty chorus which was lifted, lifted, up, up, up on the wings of Inspiration, until it thundered at the closed Gates of the Holy of Holies and flung them wide open, and standing in the very Presence of the Creator, it received His joyous acceptance and benediction. Then, laden with Divine Favor, the echo of that mighty chorus of the Prayer of the Universe returned, riding on a chariot of fire, and as it sped, dancing and breathing through space, the blind received sight, the deaf became hearing, the dumb spoke and the dead were quickened . . . and as it journeyed past the Stars, darkness vanished and light leapt into life . . . and as it sang in the assemblages of the humanities of the planets, barren minds were transformed into paradises of flowers . . . and as it penetrated into the secret chambers of the hearts, they were changed into treasuries of the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE SWORD OF LIGHT

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Chapter XXI

THE SWORD OF LIGHT

FOR weeks the examinations of the inter-stellar Students had been going on with steadfast regularity. These scholars, who for the first time had been brought together from the widely-scattered provinces of Heaven had done well, and the results were pleasing to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. Somehow or other, I also managed to come through the ordeal, showing no marked brilliancy in any direction it is true, but hitting a fair average in all the subjects which I had undertaken. There were still great and vast problems which I could not solve and certain tantalizing subjects which were totally beyond my comprehension, but they let me pass with a tolerant gesture. I knew exactly what they were thinking. It was something to this effect: "No one should ever expect any better showing from a vagabond. A vagabond is not a scholar."

Still, there was one commendable point to my credit, I had a record of undeviating attendance, and the professors might have come to the conclusion that if a student were so studious as to attend every lecture in Heaven, he might amount to something on Earth. So I passed through the examination crucible, and I felt very proud, very happy, though Del Aram rather took the wind out of my sails by congratulating me with such warmth and such sighs

of relief that I realized that she had been torturing herself with grave doubts concerning my abilities.

The atmosphere of the University was pregnant with great and glorious hopes. Innumerable farewell parties were given by the Students. Many of them were not destined to meet again in this life, and the ties of mutual interest and friendship were very hard to break.

There was much activity at the Headquarters of the Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society. The Army of Light was in good shape and new soldiers were being recruited all the time. Hakim Hakimian, who had been appointed aide-de-camp to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, was busy with the arrangements of the multifarious affairs of the Caravan. The Letters of the Living were kept in touch with all that was going on and were continuously called upon for advice. They supervised the maneuverings of their divisions, and at all moments held themselves in readiness for the final command of the Supreme General

And now came the day of the Commencement Exercises, the Graduation Day of the Students of the Stars!

Ahang-zanr conducted the heavenly orchestra for the last time.

Atash-bar read a poem in honor of the Class.

Shahnaz-nour sang the Universal Anthem.

The Amphitheatre was filled with the spirits of the Worlds.

Those who had enlisted in the Army of Light sat on one side, and the thousands of Students who were returning to their own globes sat on the other side.

Of course, the supreme event was the address of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher to the new Graduates. On

this day, a river of light, wisdom, truth, music and sweetness poured from His heart. It was a most comprehensive talk, a bible of instruction and a compendium of spiritual ideals for the future guidance of His Class.

When He arose from His seat and came forward, He looked for a moment into the happy faces of the Students whom He had been teaching; now about to become teachers themselves. Then He turned His gaze upon the benign countenances of the Saviours of old, the divine Alumnae of the Universal University who had come from Lands afar off to witness this ceremony and to hear Him again speak on the eternal verities. Then He began:

"My masters of celestial sciences! Today I am placing in your hands the Mandate of the Stars! It is this: The Universe has become conscious of the fact that there is a single cause of justice and mercy, of love and liberty for the humanities of all the globes and all the planets. Your fellow-beings are living in *one space* and your duty as the sky-gods of eternity is to teach that they must also become *one in thought*. Above everything, cherish the cause of the people, for their cause is the Cause of God and the Cause of God is peace, joy and security. So as to be able to render this service, you have been united here by a communion of Universal Principles and bound together with inter-stellar rays of similar thoughts and ideals. The arrival of the Prophets of the Worlds proves conclusively this ancient and mystical friendship. They have brought us new hopes and have given us new youth and new courage. They are here to tell us that their work must be continued and expanded with greater momentum and vitality, until Universal Redemption is realized and all the Earths have become Heavens.

"You as Soldiers of Progress, shall have generals, but never masters, and you must see to it that war between the classes, war between religions and war between nations cease to be waged, and that Eternal Peace reigns over your homes. Know this of a certainty: There is a tumulteous wave of spiritual Force moving through the Universe, and every person who opposes himself to that wave will go down in defeat. You who have become cognizant of this fact must declare in no uncertain terms the Presence of this Force and unlock the door of its possibilities before the faces of the humanities of the Stars. Your spirits must be intolerant of all things that hold the human mind in restraint. You must be intolerant of everything that seeks to retard the advancement of spiritual ideals Spiritual life is FREE and must ever remain FREE. There has never been danger nor will there ever be danger, in utter freedom of Spiritual Life. Danger comes when ambitious and self-seeking individuals try to restrain it for their own benefits. Do away with the law of domination Change, progress, advancement are the laws of independent Investigation of Truth.

"My beloved sons and daughters of the Realm of Freedom!

"This is the challenge of the Spirit of Truth:

"To ever identify yourselves with Universal Life.

"To cultivate comprehensive vision.

"To entertain, deep, undenominational, inter-religious, inter-social sympathies.

"To attain to the plain of serene detachment.

"To evolve within your souls that noblest synthesis called Personality, dedicated, ardent, joyous and quick to register

the wants and needs of those to whom you are called upon to minister.

"To draw together the unifying elements of the religions and cultures of your worlds by co-ordinating their constructive principles and to contribute something tangible and vital toward the Peace of your civilizations and the Ideals of a Spiritual Humanity.

"Divine pictures are engraved by the Great Artist on the tablets of your souls and in the deeps of your beings. These you must cause to rise out of the hidden chambers of your hearts, so that they may manifest themselves in the arena of life. This is not the day of image-breaking! Nay rather, it is an era of picture-making. The command of the Lord is that *you shall make an image of your fellowman, evoke his spiritual likeness out of the recesses of your consciousness, and then worship that likeness, which is in the very image of God.* Make it possible for yourselves to not only live *for* others but to live *in* others.

"When you carry all men within yourselves, then will you become a meeting-point of the various stages of reality; you will become the rod, the root and the flower; you will become the mind of humanity, and humanity will become your mind, breathing and living in you. You will become the Thought of God—one harmonious center of many souls. Towards you *all* things will flow, and from you *all* things will go to *all*. You are then the Etherial Man, carried by Love above material things, receiving in peace the Incomparable Light—a Light that shall enfold you and penetrate every fibre of your being.

"What is this Light? It is the contemplation of the Infinite and the Intuition of Eternity. You behold that which

you are, and you are that which you behold. Your being, without losing anything of its own distinct personality, will be forever united with the Divine Personality of the Creator.

"Having attained to the station of the Etherial Man, God has not destined for you any humiliation but glorification. And if ever you allow yourself to be humiliated, you are humiliating your Creator. You are now a dweller in the Mansion of Eternity.

"Where is the Mansion of Eternity? It is in the heart of man. Learn to adore God in that Mansion, in that Temple! Know that this is truth, this is spirit, and this is life. You are the suns of space and a heaven filled with stars. You are Love, and God is Love, and both are One. There is no God but He who is the intellectual and spiritual Fountain of Beauty and Love.

"There is a throne in every one of you, and that is the throne on which God is to be established. All the deities reside in the human breast. Go and find therein the humanities of your globes. Here in the heart is the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life. The life of the Universe is God. Man is God's manifestation, and there is nothing in the Universe that is not destined for him.

"Inasmuch as everything is for man, man should free man; man should redeem man; man should not enslave man. You must create a state of consciousness in which 'educated bandits' may find no field to exploit their less fortunate fellows. You must bring about a condition which allows the people to live noble, sublime lives,—lives which are rounded and perfect on every side—the intellectual side, the spiritual side, the artistic side and the economic side—each and all bestowing their treasures upon the people—so that they may boast not only of education but of intelligence.

and re-educate themselves and re-shape their lives upon a positive foundation of stability.

"My Representatives of the Stars! I declare unto you that your humanities are beginning to be thrilled with new impulses of Liberty, and you, as the Soldiers of Progress, must preserve this inestimable heritage and guard it against all wily agressors. The call of the hour is for unceasing vigilance! The spiritual spindles are actually weaving the web of a universal history; the spiritual shuttles are threading the warp and woof of a new garment to be worn by the children of a New Creation, whose aim will be the union of all the souls of the inhabitants of the Stars in the religion of Love. You are returning to your celestial homes to teach your people and to practice in their midst our Comradeship of Freedom—a Comradeship that will become vital to your continuous existence. You are returning to mobilize the spiritual forces of the Armies of Light into a Union of wills and in one common purpose!

"My beloved comrades! Each of you as an individual, in your new lives and in your new opportunities, has three aspects of existence—First: A relationship with the universal creative life of which your individuality is an outgrowth and an expression. Second: A relationship with your own selves in their physical and mental manifestations. Third: A relationship with your fellow-beings in connection with their social life.

"As you enter upon the threshold of your new vocations you will have to deal with all these phases. Each one of you must create a divine attitude, to become, as time goes on, a focus of spiritual, intellectual and social influences through which the people may be led to bring

their lives into harmony with the laws of the Universe and to contribute their portion in the service of the common good.

"You have been taught, in the Universal University, the wisdom of the Prophets; the origin and destiny of humanity, in terms of spiritual science and in accordance with the science of the spirit; the understanding of the laws of Art and Peace, philosophy and health, physiology and psychology. You have been trained in social and moral idealism and have realized the benefits of co-operative efforts by seeing every day the fruits of the civilization of the Supreme Star.

"By reading the history of the Saviours of the humanities, you have come to know that the establishment of the reign of perfect righteousness and spiritual justice on the Stars, which has been the aim of our glorious Alumnae, was a task calling for self-sacrifice, devotion and creative intelligence. It was a task which has demanded patience, perseverance and renunciation, a task which has required much re-education and social and mental reconstruction.

"It is along these ascending lines that you must set yourselves to function in your separate and distinct paths, ever with the ultimate hope of the spiritual co-ordination of the Ideals of all the past Teachers. You have listened to the Messages of a number of the Manifestations, and they have proven to you that they were Channels for the dissemination of the same Universal Influences; that They were candles lighted by the same Fire, trying to illumine the same hearts and urging all men to seek spiritual harmony and to make contact with the same Creative Power. You have studied the sacred

Scriptures of the Saviours of the Stars and it has become evident to you that these were the records of Their striving for the discovery of life's spiritual meaning, for the tapping of life's exhaustless fountain of inspiration—records of unwearied search after truth, and beauty.

"In this Heaven of Freedom, we have never had any dogmatic classifications of 'saved saints' and 'lost sinners'. Every soul has been looked upon as innately pure and holy—on its path of development and attainment to greater purity and greater holiness.

"Never set a traditional background to your work. Serve always contemporary needs—the souls' cry for light, guidance, and love. Know truly that all things are made sacred when used to liberate and exalt the human spirit. Register your names in the book of the temple of Love and Freedom only, which is built by God for the sole purpose of spiritual fellowship.

"Your progress in the path of Truth is to the extent of the courage of your conviction. Dedicate your lives to the championship of freedom of expression, and reserve for yourselves power of judgment and discrimination without outside authority. Offer to the people not a static, but a growing, evangelical, convincing, fiery faith based upon *spiritual realism* and *scientific idealism*. Do not teach your people a theocratic autocracy, but declare the era of SPIRITUALIZED DEMOCRACY.

"Happiness can be reached not by sacrificing to the gods, by blind obedience to their commands, nor by long painful prayers, but in ceaseless activity, in doing good, in caring for the sick, in feeding the helpless, in

founding hospitals both for men and animals, in giving pure water to the thirsty, in distributing clothes, food and flowers among the needy.

"Let your Faith become the Spiritual Radium of the Universe which does not exhaust itself. But let it not be expensive. Make it available to every child of God.

"Sound everlastingly the Song of the Celestial Caravan:

"Self-search

"Self-realization

"Self-unfoldment.

"These Prophets who have come to visit you do not wish you to always look backward to Them, but advise you to go forward and to encourage others to join the adventurous pilgrimage of life. They Themselves were able to look forward and to go forward—far ahead of their contemporaries. That is why They became the Prophets and the Saviours of Their times.

"Live on for the good and happiness of the world!

"Live on so long as faith stirs in your breasts!

"Live on for the salvation of the people of the future!

"Keep no record of your flight through the sky, but let its joy pierce your bodies!

"Live in the world of dreams! You are the dreamers of God. Dream long enough and persistently enough, and the undreaming world will begin to dream with you. But let your dreams be also the dreams of your Maker—the dream of wise Freedom made contagious; the dream of gratitude rising from broken fetters; the dream of nations in love with one another, without a thought of hatred or of danger; the dream of tyrants stripped of their tyrannies; the dream of oppressors despoiled

of their prey; the dream of coercion laid prostrate once for all; the dream of a warm, throbbing, one-hearted democracy of brothers.

"O my Knights of the Kingdom of Romance! Clear the way for the grand tournament of the humanities of the Stars! Prepare the hearts for the pageant of the nations of the globes! Keep up the mighty struggle! Let it go on with greater zest—the struggle to think the best thoughts and to express them in tone and in color, in form and in word; the struggle to do the greatest deeds and to lead the noblest and the most useful lives; the struggle to see clearest and know truest and love strongest.

"And who shall lead the Caravan? He that is Good and Wise shall lead. Who is the Good and the Wise? He that loves most is the best and the wisest. And he it is that leads already. Tell this open secret to the self-occupied. Let the people love and they will lead; let the people love and theirs will be power! Love is the real *revolution*. For Love *alone* strikes at the very root of ill.

"O shining suns of the heavens of humanity! By your examples, let it become apparent that all coarseness and roughness of speech, all tendency to argumentativeness must absolutely disappear, and that one who is prone to it should check himself when the impulse towards it rises; he should say little, and speak always with courtesy. Exquisite delicacy of speech and thought is greatly needed—that rare and joyous aroma of perfect tact which can never jar nor offend. Be humble if you would attain wisdom; be humble still when you have attained wisdom. Cultivate the frag-

rant plant, humility, until its sweet fragrance permeates every fibre of your being.

"There is no more certain method of active, spiritual progress than to devote one's self to helping others on the upward path. And he who tries to develop love within himself will be saved from many mistakes. Love is the supreme virtue without which all other qualifications avail us not. You must not only be always ready to serve, you must be ever watching for opportunities—nay, making opportunities to be helpful in small things, so that when the greater things come, you may not fail to see them.

"In this Universal University, a living inter-stellar Brotherhood has been born—the Child of Love. You must see to it that it wears the proper garments in your own world. See to it that its delicate hands and tiny, dimpled feet are not bandaged with the fetters of rules and the chains of Organization. Give it time to grow, to develop its limbs and muscles and to strengthen its bones so that it may become able to stand on its own feet. If you let others confine this Child of Love, its normal growth will be stunted. It will become pale and emaciated, anaemic and insane, and will finally be strangled by the iron laws of rigid creeds and dogmas. Therefore, let it play and romp in the expanse of the Universe and let it guide, inspire and uplift you to the heights of Glory. Herein lies a profound mystery, were you of those who know!

"This Child of Love can never wear the straight-jacket of By-laws. This Child is the vehicle for the rollicking laughter of the Angels and the rhythmic dance of the Stars. It is the instrument of life and fellowship. Its body is both human and spiritual, and

it beats with the pulses of sympathy and tenderness towards all the creatures. Never allow selfish and disciplinarian nurses to get control of the training of this Child of Brotherhood, for they will kill it. Beware of religious atheists and spiritual hypocrites, who in the name of God employ your own weapons of truth to silence your voice and to neutralize your influence. And never think of surrender to the enemies of Light. Let your motto be: *Defense but not Defiance!*

"This Brotherhood is no other than the promised Kingdom of Heaven, now realized for the first time among the humanities of the Stars, and they shall come from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South, and sit around the Banquet table of the Word of God.

"Let us arise and hold each other's hands and pledge ourselves to the Covenant of Friendship."

As one man, the Students arose and stood upon their feet, their faces shining with the light of divine resolution—a great Army indeed—the Army of the Heavens! And the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher looked earnestly into those faces and at those thousands and ten thousands of hands gripping one another—like a band of steel—and then He thundered across the silence of that starry host:

"Through your mighty union, through your unquenchable thirst for freedom of conscience will the men of the Stars come to look into each other's faces, and say:

"'We are brothers and have one common purpose.

"'We did not realize it before, but we do realize it now, and this is our Covenant of Friendship:

"'Love is to be the rule of our lives.

"'The quest of truth our sacrament.

"'Service our prayer.

"'To dwell together in peace our aim.

"'To seek knowledge in freedom.

"'To associate with all in fellowship.

"'To the end that all souls may grow into harmony with the Divine.'

"You are the Soldiers of Light and the Army of the Day! You are not of the Night nor of Darkness.

"Then let those who are of the Day don the breastplates of Faith, the armour of Love and the helmets of Hope. Let them take courage and stand upon their feet, their loins girt about with truth, and raising the bucklers of Mercy, the swords of Spirit and the Standards of Prayer, go forth, and in the strength of the Lord and with the power of His might, conquer the enemies of Light and Freedom.

"The Eyes of the Stars are upon you!"

Then each graduate Student-soldier received from the hand of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher his diploma—a Sword of Light, on the hilt of which was engraved the arms of the Heavens, and in letters of diamond his name.

THE CHILD OF LOVE

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Chapter XXII

THE CHILD OF LOVE

"WHAT are you going to do with your diploma?" Del Aram asked as I sat in her Studio.

"Do you mean the Sword of Light?" I returned.

"Yes."

"Well, the colleges of the Earth do not give us Swords for diplomas."

"What do they give?"

"Oh, pieces of parchment."

"What do you do with them?"

"Hang them."

"Hang them?"

"Of course! Frame them and hang them on the wall and invite our friends who are not college graduates to come to see them and we make them feel envious and small, and we, ourselves feel intellectually generous and spiritually superior."

"But is this the result of education on Earth? Do you think it is right?"

"It all depends. I think it is right on certain occasions. Do you know, Del Aram, I am a little disappointed at not having received the parchment. I was thinking of framing it in gold and brocade and hanging it in my ancestral hall in Esphahan, and inviting the whole town and letting them see what a great fellow I

had become. A graduate from the Universal University on the Supreme Star! That would have given them something to think about! Not everyone from Esphahan could go so far for an education! A graduate——"

"And no more a vagabond?" she asked teasingly.

"O yes, a vagabond would always be a vagabond!"

"And now, you have no parchment."

"That is it—no parchment, and I am sorely disappointed, for I will never be able to convince a single soul that I have been anywhere or that I have done anything."

"Vagabond! I am afraid that you will never change—always the same yet ever different."

"What do you mean?"

"I think you know. We have discussed it a hundred times—but yet perhaps you do not know what I mean."

"I cannot understand you, Del Aram."

"Don't be hurt, please. I was not going to scold you. What I meant to say was this: You cannot fool me much longer."

"I have never tried."

"You have not only fooled me but almost everybody else."

"Oh!"

"I know you now better than you know yourself."

"Oh!"

"Under the title of 'Vagabond,' in the guise of bravado and irresponsibility, under the cloak of bombastic, meaningless pretensions, you have almost succeeded in hiding your true nature from us all."

"I do not understand you."

"You claim to be a vagabond, and yet you are the

most hard working man that I have ever known! You tell us that we should take life as a joke, and yet you take it more seriously than anyone else. You have filled the heavens with your voice of freedom, yet you are tied every minute to your interests and schemes. You cry on every occasion that you hate organization, yet you organize men and things more efficiently, more thoroughly and more skilfully than those who have done it for years. You wish us to be happy—yet—yet—you are at times the saddest man that I have ever seen."

Tears stood in her eyes.

"No," I cried. "I am not sad. See! I am happy—I laugh! I dance! I am a vagabond!"

"Come, dear heart, please abandon the dramatics for a little while," and she took my hand and drew me to her side with infinite tenderness. "You are just a child—in many ways a child—in many ways a genius. Often you do not mean what you say, often you do not understand the significance of your own deeds. What a strange, unfathomable creature you are! So innocent, yet so profound; so simple, yet so intricate; so direct, yet so mysterious!"

"Oh!"

"Last night, in the Paradise of Flowers, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher spoke to me about you."

"Yes?" I eagerly inquired. "What did He say?"

"He opened my eyes to your hidden qualities."

"To my hidden qualities?"

"Yes; to the things that I have told you about already, and to many more."

"Many more?"

"He said: 'The Vagabond is the Darling of the Gods'."

"And of the goddesses?"

"Of one!"

"Who?"

She opened her hands wide, waiting, silent, eloquent, beautiful, her whole body trembling with a sudden wave of emotion and so I took her in my arms and poured upon her glorious face a shower of burning kisses, mixed with tears of joy and gratitude.

"We are then made one!" I breathed happily.

"No! We are as yet two, but we will be made one, some day, by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher."

"Oh, Del Aram! Just to rest in your protecting arms after all these stormy years—to reach the goal after the weary search—this is peace—this is beatitude!"

"Dear Vagabond! I want to make you happy—and it will be my offering at the altar of the gods, to prove to them that I love you."

"And I, Del Aram, my beloved, my treasure, my life, it seems to me that I have always loved you—loved you with the madness and passion of youth. Ere the whirls and clouds of shining vapors began their etherial dance in the unfathomable distance; before the masses of flaming matter and the flaring centers of heat joined together in their eternal procession through the vastness of space; prior to the march of the spinning globes and the pulsing planets in the race of life—the fire of love for you was kindled on the altar of my heart."

"Vagabond! That is beautiful, and I believe that it is true, for the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher told me that we had been made for each other, that we are indeed one!"

"One and indivisible—now and forever!"

"And now, Vagabond, I want to tell you what the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher said."

"I know already what He said—I am the Darling of the Gods."

"Yes, He said this, but also something more important."

"Something more important?"

"Exactly! He said: 'You must stand by the Vagabond and fight with and for him'."

"Fight with and for me? With what?"

"That is just what I asked you about in the very beginning."

"Oh, with the Sword of Light?"

"Yes. He said: 'You must stand by the Vagabond and fight with and for him with the Sword of Light and conquer the cities of the hearts and establish on their thrones the King of Love'."

"And who is the King of Love?"

"Do you remember what He said about the birth of the Child of Love?"

"Yes, yes, I could never forget it."

"Well, He said: 'You and the Vagabond should watch over the Child of Love, feed it with the milk of kindness and protect it from all harm'."

"Protect it from all harm?"

"Yes, yes, He said, 'The Child of Love will have many enemies, and with the Sword of Light you must guard it against their machinations and intrigues until it grows to manhood and then—'"

"And then—?"

"He will rule the world with our inheritance."

"Our inheritance?"

"Yes, our inheritance to him; The Sword of Light. He will rule the Earth as the King of Love, and mankind will enshrine him in their hearts."

"And is this to be our life-work?" I asked all athrill with the fire of a new vision.

"Yes. A glorious work and a more glorious mission."

"I know. Almost too glorious even to conceive of!"

"The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher will come here Himself to talk to us."

"What! He will come here!"

And at that moment the door opened and He entered, smiling. "My children, I would see you and talk with you while you are one—not two."

"But my Lord," I stammered and the words died on my lips.

And He said, "I will sit beside you and hold your hands in mine and look into your starry eyes for I have loved you both and loved the love which you have cherished for one another. Today this love must give you an added Purpose and an added strength for we are about to start on our celestial pilgrimage toward the Earth —a pilgrimage which is to be fraught with many dangers, and complicated with many difficulties."

"Have you received any news?" Del Aram asked.

"Yes, Nasseem, who has just arrived from the Earth has brought word that Zolmani, one of the trusted generals of the Wicked One, from the Kingdom of Erebus, has discovered our plans and has informed Doshmanshab, the Prince of Darkness, that the Army of Light will ere long invade his kingdom. Consequently, the vast Forces of the False Teacher are being mobilized and concentrated, and I see that there will be warfare.

the like of which the eyes of men and Angels have not witnessed."

"Where?" I asked tremblingly,

"Between the Heavens and the Earth."

Del Aram covered her eyes.

"For this reason I have decided to speak with you about the Child of Love. The struggle between the Armies of Light and Darkness will be world-shaking and devastating, but whether we lose or win, it will be your mission to protect the growing life of this Divine Child."

"We pledge ourselves not to relax in vigilance," whispered Del Aram.

"This Child of Love is the prism through which will pass the shining rays of freedom of consciousness and universality of thought. It is the prism which will permit the sunbeams of spirituality to fecundate the souls of the humanity of the Earth. It is the prism through which the pure principles of the Religion of Beauty will be cast to all directions. It is the spirit which will quicken the inanimate flesh."

"O, Beloved Teacher," I pled, "tell us how to nurture this glorious being."

"Do not be anxious. The Sun of Love is already hidden beneath the horizon of his tender body. Only see to it that his soul grow amid the flowers of the Earth and the breezes of the sky, so that in time his unseen powers will be revealed and released, like the fragrance of a full-blown rose, to perfume and vivify the bodies and the souls."

"And how shall we instruct this Child of Love?" the mother instinct of Del Aram prompted her to ask.

"Do not wrap your lessons in symbols! Teach the Child to have courage and to look at the naked truth. Teach him to be daring and full of faith. Teach him the kindness and mercy of God. Teach him with Love, for the Creator has begemmed the heaven of his soul with the stars of love. Never speak to him of death but only of life. Teach him that every person shall reach the Kingdom of God if he but follow the law of Love; that all men form but a single family of souls, belonging to one spiritual plane and being of the same essence—God. Tell him when he starts his work, to leave the door open to all, to demand no vows, to impose no conditions and to let everyone exercise his free conscience. Let him give Love and ask nothing in return save Love!"

"And what will be the outline of his teachings?" I asked.

"Let him gather all mankind under his protecting wings and declare unto them:

" 'The Temple of the Children of Love is the Universe. Its vault is the infinite space. From its altar rise the prayers of all creatures toward the throne of the Almighty. Its dome resting on many pillars—each pillar representing one religion—will unite them all, and its pinnacle will rise reaching the Height of Romance—God.

" 'The religion of the Children of Love has no dogmas. It teaches men to evolve through Love into beauty and godness and happiness. Its horizon is limitless; now and then it may *seem* to have a limit, but when the traveller reaches the spot beyond which his eyes could not see, a new horizon opens before him again and again.

" 'The Children of Love are not content with hoping, for *hope* after all is *passive waiting*. They transmit their hope into will-power—that state of activity which the Forces on High evolve out of the inner consciousness unto the visible plane of life. The Children of Love do not admit of any authority on the terrestrial plane which claims power over their souls, for to them the soul's one authority is God and the soul obeys only the Will of God, which is Freedom. Beware, beware, and again I say, beware, beware of yielding to any dominion which assumes to govern the soul! Such dominion appropriates God's right and authority, and God's right and authority deals spiritually and directly with each one.

" 'The Children of Love transform knowledge into faith and faith into knowledge. They reveal living truths and are sources of inexhaustible goodness. They have no fears nor doubts, and retain an unchanging confidence in themselves and in the Superior Powers. The Children of Love travel on the way with open eyes. Once on the Path of light, they continue to advance unceasingly, guiding those who have lost their bearings. They unite all the souls together and assist them in reaching the spiritual plane. They love all beings, and their hope is that all beings will love each other.

" 'To the Children of Love, humanity is a garden of variegated flowers, all stretching their petals to the sun—their God, while the pollen causes them to link themselves to one another. In the garden, the smallest, humblest flowers live peacefully and fragrantly by the side of the most magnificent roses'."

"And what is the aim of the Children of Love?" asked Del Aram.

"Their aim is to transform the terrestial plane into a new world, fit for gods and goddesses;

"To partake of the essence of God's Spirit through service to their fellowmen;

"To humanize knowledge;

"To spiritualize science;

"To civilize faith;

"To democratize religion;

"To bring God to man and to take man to God;

"To be alive to the appreciation of Beauty;

"To penetrate into the lives of all beings and become spiritually united with them;

"To transmute matter into Superior Vital Principle;

"To establish fraternity in all the countries and among all the races."

"And where is the end and where the beginning?" Del Aram asked.

"To the Children of Love everything eternally *ends* and everything eternally *begins*."

Suddenly the door of the studio was thrown open and Hakim Hakimian entered. He advanced toward the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and like an officer in the presence of his general, stood erect, ready to receive his orders. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher seemed to be expecting him:

"You have arrived at the right moment," he said. "I have just told Del Aram and the Vagabond that to the Children of Love everything eternally ends and everything eternally begins. We have ended one chapter of our lives

on the Supreme Star, and soon we will begin another on Kesh-makesh. The time has come. Give out the orders for the immediate, universal mobilization of the Army of Light!"

Hakim Hakimian bowed low and was about to leave, but the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher motioned to him to wait. Then turning to Del Aram and me He said:

"You two have much to do, Vagabonds of the Stars! See that your regiment is in fighting mood and reckless! I expect from them gallantry, self-sacrifice and heroism. Give them my special greetings!"

Then to Hakim Hakimian:

"Come with me. We two also have much to do before the Army starts on its adventurous pilgrimage."

We were left alone.

We were speechless.

The tocsin of war had sounded!

The command had been issued:

"Let the Army of Light strike its tents and start on its march through the sky!"

Our bodies were shaking with unutterable emotion, and we wept. Then I took the two hands of Del Aram and repeated:

"To the Children of Love everything eternally *ends* and everything eternally *begins*."

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

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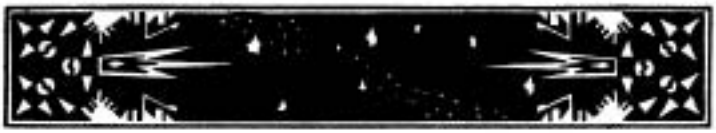

Chapter XXIII

THE BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

THE order of the Supreme General was given out:
Immediate mobilization of the Army of Light!

Rank upon rank, company after company, the regiments were massed on the Plain of Firdaus.

The Army was divided into eighteen Grand Divisions, each division being under the supervision of one of the Letters of Unity. Inasmuch as the Heavens were to be our battlefield, the eighteen Grand Divisions were apportioned to its four corners. Five of them were assigned to the East; five to the West; four to the North and four to the South, while in the very center of the sky the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, as the Generalissimo of the entire Army, was to establish His Headquarters, surrounded by His "Invincibles."

At sunrise, clad in the spiritual armour of war, He inspected for the last time the serried ranks of the Army of Light. Then He ascended a high hill where all could see and hear Him, and addressed His warriors:

"We are on the eve of a momentous campaign and the eyes of the Stars are upon us! We had expected no opposition and had hoped to land on Kesh-makesh with comparative safety, but Zolmani, one of the leaders of the Forces of Darkness, has become acquainted with our plans

and has informed the Prince of Night, Doshman-shab, of our impending pilgrimage. Therefore, the Prince of Night has mobilized his entire man-power and stands prepared to prevent our conjunction with the small Army of Light upon the Earth, which the Higher Powers have quietly been training to receive us.

"Through Nasseem, my Sky Messenger, I have offered them peace, honor and security, but our conditions have been rejected with scorn and laughter. And Doshman-shab has sent word that if ever I attempt the 'invasion of the Earth with the Army of Light, he will destroy half of my men and imprison the other half in the subterranean regions of Tareekee, in the Kingdom of Zamestan. Even I may not escape his fury, but may have to suffer imprisonment for the duration of my mortal life.

"Let this be known to all: We wrestle not with man, but with the evils of flesh and blood. Our struggle is not against humanity, but against the principles of darkness, injustice, intolerance and ignorance. We are confronted by both outward and inward evils—spirits of uncleanliness, of superstition—in the natural and supernatural worlds, and our clear aim is to extirpate the tree of the Powers of Darkness, root and branch. Therefore, this will be an open war and an open war to the finish! The Worlds' Evil Spirit is fully armed and is holding himself in readiness to annihilate the World's Holy Spirit!

"For this reason, I call on you, Soldiers of Light, give battle to the Soldiers of Darkness! The hosts of the visible material world are arrayed in iron and steel against the powers of the invisible spiritual world!

"Today, through your enrollment in this Army, you have

assumed each and every one a highly important and responsible position in the scheme of future civilization. You stand in the middle, between the worlds of Light and Darkness, and still are left to your own free will.

"Yours is the opportunity of gaining victory for the Cause of Humanity!

"Yours is the joy of establishing the Kingdom of Heaven on the throne of the Earth!

"Yours is the privilege of unfurling the Standard of Brotherhood on the hill-tops of a new world!

"Yours is the mission of helping in the foundation of the Universal University on a new Star!

"The Lord of Light has bestowed His bounties upon you, accomplished His evidences in you and manifested His truths through you. And now, what will your endeavors show forth in degrees of devotion?"

After this stirring address, we were commanded to swim across the Lake of Behjat, which we did without any difficulty. It had the marvelous effect of endowing us with power to soar through the atmosphere with the utmost ease and grace. Once we had crossed the Lake of Behjat, numerous Students who did not belong to the Army of Light, but who had been with us up to this point, bade farewell to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and winged their ways toward their starry homes. Then we started on our pilgrimage to the Earth.

After we had travelled for some time, the configuration of the Stars assumed their familiar aspects and I could recognize the Zodiacal Houses. Soon we were passing through the Milky Way, and like a garden of flowers, the splendors of the sky and the pageant of the heavens un-

folded before our vision. All around us were clusters of suns and unaccountable solar systems. The immeasurable depths were astir with life and motion, music and dance. Every now and again one of the Students would detach himself from the Army of Light as it passed his home, while those who had volunteered in the Expeditionary Force passed by their native Stars conscious of the approval and blessings of their people, who had been informed by the Messengers of the Sky concerning their approaching venture.

A deeply significant thing that came to pass, and which had incalculable influence on the future of our entire plan, was the fact that the governments of those Stars had become genuinely interested in our celestial pilgrimage, and as a precautionary, patriotic and cosmopolitan measure had sent pass-words to their countrymen, to be used if they at any time should be in need of assistance, when the entire forces of their home governments would be rushed to their help. Also, at my last interview with them, Faravan-taher and Afsar-shad had insisted that, in case of need, I should return to the Supreme Star, where within the shortest space of time, the whole army of that celestial Democracy would be placed at the disposal of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. Through wireless, radiography, radiophony and psycho-photography, much inter-stellar correspondence had been carried on between the Student-soldiers and the governments of their respective worlds, and all this information had been placed at the disposal of the officers of the Heaven-bent-toward-Earth Society, so that I was fully acquainted with all that was going on. I had taken pains to learn by heart all the pass-words, without the knowledge of which, as things turned out later, I would have been utterly useless.

We journeyed on and on, through cosmic dust, showers of Stars and colored planets—flying in the bosom of the Infinite. Jameh-zar pointed out to me his planet in the Nebula of Cygnus—a vast network of thousands of suns and Stars, and wished that he could take me there on a sight-seeing tour and show me the wonders of the civilization of his people. The government of Alpha Centauri, the peaceful home of Doust Parast, had been advised of the time that we were to pass through the atmosphere of their world, and they sent a great delegation to meet and greet us in mid-heaven. Azad-pa danced with glee when she saw the giant Aldebaran; Shahnaz-nour could not refrain from singing one of the touching folk-songs of Sirius as that globe was sighted, and Bazi-del, Pasand-bana, Rouh-afza, Sehhat-deh, Zour-afshan, Darbar-adli and Elm-parvaz became quite home-sick when one by one they passed by their dwelling-places—Altair, Betelgeuse, Antares, Arcturus, Canopus, Vega and Capella.

Degree by degree, we were drawing nearer and nearer to our destination, and soon we entered the atmosphere of our own solar system, and I felt at home. The whole thing appeared so small, so comfortable, like a tiny jewelled watch which one could wear on one's wrist and forget about. Delighted as I was to be again in our own backyards of Heaven, I forgot for the moment that not only I but all of those who were with me were not to be welcomed, but rather to be repulsed as intruders.

Tasveer-kash pointed out Neptune, slowly wending its way along its orbit, and described to me its great museum which held statues of distinguished men chiseled by himself. Jahan-nama was wild with delight when he descried Uranus, but Hakim Hakimian was too busy to even notice

Saturn, the country which claimed him as an honored citizen. Atash-bar was exhilarated at the sight of Jupiter to the point of composing an ode. Sar-sar suffered at leaving us, but his duty toward the shattered Army of Light called him to Mars. I do not know what prompted me, but in farewell, I told him that we might meet again. I was at the side of Del Aram as the brilliant Venus mounted the horizon, and she wept for very joy, but Mercury, the swift runner of the sky, could not be located by Ahang-zan, and he deferred his expressions of happiness to some future occasion.

As for me, I could now see the Earth, its poles white with snow and its equatorial belt green with luxuriant vegetation, but I was filled with strange forebodings. I began to wonder how Zolmani became acquainted with our plans. It must have been he who, disguised as a captive, in the Kingdom of Erebus, had returned with us on board one of the airships of the City of the Heavens. I remembered that we conversed together and he related to me a hard-luck story, describing how he was a native of one of the cities in the neighborhood of the Kingdom of Erebus, and how he had always opposed the Devil's crew, having once killed two hundred of them, and finally how he had been captured and tortured by the Enemies of the Light. He had given up all hope of rescue when we saved him. O how he wept and tried to kiss my hands to show his appreciation, and imbecile that I was, I believed him and did much to advance his interests during the period which followed, repeatedly making it easier for him to spy on us and gain all the valuable information that he was in search of. Daily he had visited the headquarters of the Heaven-bent-toward Earth Society, listening to everything that was go-

ing on. Then he had put in his application to become a soldier in the Army of Light. Somehow or other, Del-Aram always mistrusted him, but I championed his cause, and he was accepted. From that time on, he had shown much interest in our plans and had every facility to study the great Chart of Hakim Hakimian. Then he suddenly disappeared, and we considered him as the first and last deserter from the Army of Light.

Looking back on it all—had I seen him before the captives were freed? A veil was lifting from my memory. . . He it was who had tarried on the Plain of Zendan-abad to overhear the instructions given by Gor-Gor to the Army of Light . . . He it was who had stood at the right hand of the Prince of Darkness before the sacrificial totem-pole. . . . Fool that I had been! Fool, fool that I had been! By uncanny methods he must have changed the cast of his countenance in order to pass unrecognized among us. I stood aghast before the density of my powers of perception.

As I was making these unpleasant deductions, the sky suddenly became black as ink and a terrific sound shook the very foundation of creation. With a start I realized that the greatest war of the worlds had begun and that from that time on there would be no rest, no peace until one side or the other was completely annihilated.

This was a war to the finish!

The Heavens were rent in twain!

The mighty trumpet of the Army of Light was sounded throughout the Universe!

From the center of the sky we heard the word of command flung by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher!

Above and through the darkness created by the enemy, the bodies of the Soldiers of Light gleamed like Stars.

Hakim Hakimian was seen flying from East to West, from North to South, giving the last instructions.

The battlefield was the measureless expanse of the sky.

Up from the Earth, out of the Abyss of Tareekee, ascended the Prince of Night with his crew of Death!

Down out of the measureless spaces, from the pinnacles of Heaven, descended the Prince of Day with His bands of Life!

The General of Darkness, panoplied in the armament of Lies, sprang aloft without fear, his hosts following him with their deadly weapons.

The General of Light, clothed in the shining armour of Truth, held the center of the sky. His four Grand Divisions spread about him.

The two Armies faced one another and paused.

Suddenly, like a clarion out of the blue ether, I heard a familiar cry:

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!"

It was the voice of Del Aram.

Holding her standard high above her head, and followed by her regiment of women, she swept down upon the enemy.

Every atom of my being thrilled to her, and taking up the war-cry: "Forward! Ahead! Advance!" I pressed after them, my Vagabonds at my heels.

The slogan was repeated all along the front, rolling back, a mighty wave of sound, over the ranks of the descending Angels—

"Forward! Ahead! Advance!"

Day in and day out, the battle raged, ominously, furiously.

doggedly. The enemy released floods of venomous gas and brought into play its death-dealing artillery, its battering trains, machine guns, and hellish ordinances, the shrieks of which deafened our ears and threw the tribes of the Earth into a state of utter consternation, confusing their days and horrifying their nights.

After an unreckoned period of grim-visaged warfare, the Prince of Darkness and his crew were routed. Blinded by the refulgent power of the Army of Light, they sank back into the endless gloom of the Abysses of Tareekee, in the country of Zamestan.

But they were not defeated. They had no intention of resigning themselves to defeat. For, while the war in the heavens was being waged, the superior mind of Zolmani had been occupied in directing the drilling of new recruits. He had always had a rare genius for strategy and his experiences in a higher world had developed in him an even greater grasp of military matters. Moreover, he cherished a deep-rooted personal hatred for the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, who had overturned the dynasty of his ancestors on the Supreme Star and had exiled them to the country of Erebus.

So Zolmani had raised upon the Earth a larger and more portentious army, an army equipped with super-fleets of airships and super-dirigibles, upon which were mounted gatling guns and long-distance cannon, and ere we had time to celebrate our short-lived victory or to re-organize our already exhausted soldiers, the Wicked One with his fresh troops returned to the scene of action, and without warning, attacked us on all sides.

By this time our army had dwindled, for many had be-

come martyrs to the Cause and whole regiments had been taken prisoner. There had been one hand-to-hand encounter between the Prince of Night and the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, in which our Beloved Leader had received cruel wounds in His hands and on His side. The sight of this wrung our hearts with anguish, producing a devastating effect on our morale, and we were in a state of bewilderment and confusion when the new attack broke. Their columns swerving to all parts of the heavens, and then joining together in a circle of steel, the satanic hordes crushed in upon us from all sides—from the East and from the West, from the North and from the South and down from the Upper Sky over the Headquarters of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. The Army of Light displayed the most reckless courage, the most heroic self-sacrifice. But, greatly outnumbered and exhausted by unremitting onslaughts, it could hold out no longer. Along all the fronts, our lines wavered. Veiled and obscured by a vast screen of smoke and poisonous gas, we were driven in from all parts of the heavens like eddies of birds before the might of a tempest. The eighteen Grand Divisions of the Army of Light were melted away like snow under the rays of a scorching sun. Hundreds of thousands sacrified their lives and legions were made captive, including the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher.

Then Zolmani ordered his Great Prisoner to be brought before him. How he jeered at Him and laughed Him to scorn! Insultingly, he swaggered around Him, taunting:

"Where is your God? Why did He not come to your aid? Do you think He was asleep?'"

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher answered him firmly:

"Zolmani! You ask me where is my God. My God is

by my side. You ask me, why did He not come to my help. Rest assured of this: He *will come* to my help. He watches over His own. Sleep does not seize Him. He is the Sleepless!"

Then Zolmani turned to Del Aram, reaching out his foul hands, but one look from her proud, untroubled eyes seemed to unnerve him, and he shrank back abashed.

Company after company, bound and fettered, the remnant of the Army of Light, was impelled toward the Earth and herded down to the subterranean labyrinths of Tareekee.

Zolmani saw to it that I was separated from Del Aram. Although I did not learn until much later that he had persecuted her with his attentions on the Supreme Star, his present attitude made me realize with dismay, at least one of the reasons for her long-standing aversion. She was confined in a dismal cell beneath the castle where he lived and guarded day and night by watchful and sinister attendants.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was manacled with heavy chains and confined in a place without parallel—a prison, narrow, dark, and worse than a tomb.

The larger part of the Army of Light was set to work in dank, inhuman, cavernous mines.

The Vagabonds and I fared no better. We were attached to a gang of stone-crushers who were engaged in repairing the fortifications of the royal city.

Doshman-Shab and Zolmani, surrounded by the exulting crews of Hell, celebrated their unexampled victory in a saturnalian feast in mid-heaven. It was the wildest orgy ever witnessed by the sons of men, and in order to prove to the black-hearted inhabitants of Tar-Ankabout, the capi-

tal of Zamestan, the completeness of their triumph, the captives of Heaven were made to pass before them in a pitiful procession, amid the insults and jeers of a vulgar and riotous throng of torch-bearers, dancers and merrymakers.

The Army of Light was in captivity!

They were prisoners of Doshman-Shab and Zolmani.

If there were any free Soldiers of Light upon the Earth, there was no way of finding them out, for they did not dare to proclaim their faith in the open.

The Prince of Darkness and his crew ruled the expanse of the globe from pole to pole.

When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith upon the Earth?

No. He found no faith upon the Earth, but treachery.

The Gateway of Hell was made wide open, swallowing the Army of Heaven.

Destruction was universal and complete.

The Prince of Night made good his threat, for he destroyed half of the Army of Light, enslaved the other half and placed in his jail the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher.

How well he knew the end!

Did he really know the end?

Is this the end?

Are we all dreaming?

Is it true that after all this is the world of the Devil and of flesh and not the world of God and of Spirit?

Is it true that might is right?

Is it true that even the Lord of Hosts is on the side of the heaviest and greatest battalions?

God! Is this the end? This? This? The annihilation

scattering of Thy Forces? God Almighty! Answer me, answer me, now! I am knocking at Thy door! I am growing mad, mad, mad! I am losing my faith, my love, my all! Tell me, I demand an answer!

Is this the End? Is this the End?

God! I want an answer now—tell me!

I am knocking at Thy door! Show me Thy Face! Show me Thy Face! And dare to tell me—

"THIS *WAS* THE END!"

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THE DEVIL'S KITCHEN

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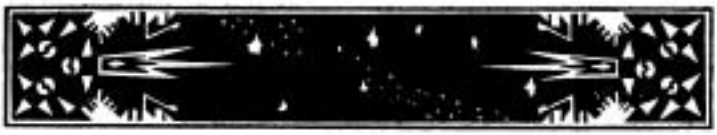

Chapter XXIV

THE DEVIL'S KITCHEN

NOW that the Vagabonds and I were chained to the gang of trench-diggers and stone-crushers and driven to work by ugly, giant-like slave-drivers, we made up our minds to make the best of a bad bargain. In reality, no one could suppress for long the effervescent spirit of a vagabond, not even the Devil, and we who had fought against the Evil Ones of the Kingdom of Erebus looked upon these Earth-bound Devils as a collection of novices and bunglers; for we knew that were it not for the directing genius of Zolmani, they would never have been able to at first defy and then defeat the Army of Light.

Soon I realized that I had one great advantage over the other captives—I knew the language of the Devils of the Earth. This fact caused much astonishment among them, and they were very curious to know how it had come about that I could speak their tongue so perfectly, without even an accent. Having learned a lesson from Zolmani, I told them that, in reality, I was a Devil also, and that I had entered the Heavens surreptitiously, with the intention of discovering the angelic secrets and of using them for the advancement and glorification of the Devil's Cause, but that when the Angels had become aware of my true identity, they had often forced me to act against my own devilish conscience, and in spite of my perfectly honest diabolical principles.

Therefore, now that I was free from my heavenly jail and its celestial authority, I was ready to enter the service of my own people—my own flesh and blood, my own kith and kin—and to do everything in my humble power, by means of the knowledge which I had gained, to forever destroy the Kingdom of the Good, to wipe away every trace of Beauty and to cast into eternal gloom every ray of Light. And I wept and begged them to give me a chance to prove my zeal in and for the cause.

The Devils hung on my every word and palpitated over my dramatic recital, which they repeated in toto to their chief, Doshman-shab. He, in turn, sent for me and in the presence of Zolmani, asked me numerous questions, to every one of which I gave apt answers in faultless, eloquent, devilish style.

The Prince spoke the "High Devil" literary language, and when I addressed him in his own soft, sibilant medium of expression, he was beside himself with joy. Springing to his feet he danced about with delight. Then he strode over to me and stood staring with his coal-black eyes for so long that I became uneasy, wondering whether he had found me out. In a moment, however, he broke into a cackle of laughter, and exclaimed that he could hardly have believed that such a typical Devil could ever have assumed the ways and mannerisms of an Angel.

Zolmani stood all this as long as he could, and then prostrating himself before the Prince, he warned him against me in "Low Devil" language. But the contrast was too evident to miss and he rose to his feet, realizing that he had made himself ridiculous in the eyes of everyone.

I had obviously made a good impression on the Prince, and he, in order to bestow upon me a token of his favor,

appointed me "Chief Interpreter of the Prisoners of the Stars." This was just what I had wanted.

I was now given a certain amount of freedom in the camps of the prisoners, and was able to listen to their grievances, to adjust their difficulties and to help them in ever so many small ways.

While on the Supreme Star, during hours of leisure, I had tried to teach the Vagabonds my own language and had found them to be fairly clever in mastering it. Afterwards, when we wished to speak privately among ourselves, we had invariably used the Earth language. And now that I was Chief Interpreter in the Royal Kingdom of Zamestan, I appointed them, one by one, as my assistants, until in time, they were out of the gang of laborers.

The day that we removed the last of all from the trenches was a sad one, for he was ill and exhausted and his back was black and blue from the stripes of the overseer. We brought him home on our shoulders, and as we sat around him, we all wept, and I set my teeth and clenched my fists and swore, yes, I swore as I had never sworn before to wipe away the Kingdom of Zamestan, to raze it to the ground, to destroy all the Devils and to take revenge, revenge, revenge!

I confided my resolution to the Vagabonds, and in the presence of our sick comrade, we held his and each other's hands and took an oath never to sit idle until our object was achieved—so help us God!

As interpreters, we were turned into a Bureau of Information, for we had access to all the labor camps, to the Devils' courts, to the lawyers, to the politicians, and most important of all, I myself could at any time reach the ears

of the Prince of Night. We became generally known as "contact men." Especially were we able to alleviate the onerous burdens of our brothers and sisters who were working in the mines and confined in the jails. Having made friends with the wardens of all the prisons, we could at any time, under one pretext or another, communicate with our comrades and send them clothes and presents.

The chief event of this period occurred when one day Doshman-shab sent for me to act as interpreter between him and the Spirit of the World's Teacher. I was overjoyed at this opportunity which permitted me to look once more into the divine countenance of my Master and to learn how He was faring.

The jail was dark, cold, vermin-ridden, and He appeared pale and emaciated, yet was He serene, resigned and loving. By certain signs, I made Him aware of my position, and He seemed to be satisfied. The Prince of Night opened the conversation.

"I have come to inquire if you are in need of anything."

"No," the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher answered, "I do not need anything. I am perfectly content."

"How can you be content in this foul jail?"

"I live in the Kingdom of Eternity and abide in the Realm of Light."

"I know only of my Kingdom of mortality and flesh and of my abode, which is Night."

"Your Kingdom and your abode are doomed to everlasting destruction."

The Prince of Night laughed and exclaimed:

"Wonder of wonders! You are my prisoner, yet you speak to me with strange assurance! Do you not know that this is your end?"

"Only God knows the end."

"I am myself quite a clever god, and I tell you: This is your end."

"The END is Light and Truth and not Darkness and Falsehood."

"Marvellous! Do you not know that you are no more the King of Light, no more the Lord of Truth? Do you not realize that my father, the Devil, gave me his Kingdom, which is now spread all over the Earth—his Kingdom of Darkness and Evil, even from everlasting to everlasting? Can you not see that you are a ruler without authority, a general without an army?"

"I am the King of Light and the Lord of Truth, and my Army is invincible and invulnerable, for they live eternally in my Kingdom of spiritual resignation and of radiant acquiescence!"

"Ha! Ha! A lunatic! A dreamer! A prophet!"

"No, not a lunatic, but a dreamer and a Prophet!"

"If you are a prophet, then prophesy for me!"

"Do you wish to hear the prophecy of the end of your reign and the fall of your empire?"

"The end of my reign? The fall of my empire? Yes, yes, let me hear it. Prophet! Go on and prophesy!" and he laughed with fiendish derision.

"Have you ever heard of the River of Na-mordany?"

"Yes, it is only a few miles from here. I have seen it many times."

"Tell me about it."

"Oh, there is not much to tell. It is a harmless little creek, the bed of which dries up in hot seasons."

"Are there any prophecies connected with it?"

"O yes. But, like all other prophecies, they never come

about nor are they ever fulfilled. Prophecies are good for credulous and weak-minded persons like yourself."

"But what are those prophecies? Would you mind telling me one of them?"

"No, I don't mind. I feel well today and I am willing to humor you," and he laughed again. "Here is one of them—the ignorant, superstitious peasants, just to give themselves consolation, whisper this to each other, when they have nothing better to do:

" 'When the River of Na-mordany overflows its banks, the rule of the Prince of Night shall be brought to an end. Then shall the whole world be carried away on its tumultuous waves; all beings shall pass impetuously down its tumbling cataracts, and like a river of warm milk, the waters shall purify and cleanse the creatures of the Earth. Then the frigid immensitly of the Kingdom of Zamestan will be changed into the balmy atmosphere of Paradise; the flames of Hell will be quenched; the fire of the endless Abyss of Tareekee will be extinguished, and the Devil and his brood will cease from tempting mankind, and washing their bodies and their souls in the River Na-mordany, will be received back as Angels by the Lord of Light and will abide in the Heaven of Truth for ever and ever. Then, in the Kingdom of Zamestan and over the yawning chasm of the Pit of Tareekee, shall arise a more beautiful world—pure and perfect, and destined to become the abode of a race of gods and goddesses, descended from the sky. This is called the restitution of all things and the beginning of a New Era, the appearance of a New Earth and a New Heaven. Then each individual shall realize that Hell, Mortality and Pain consist of Evil Thoughts, Evil Words and Evil Deeds, and that Heaven, Immortality and Happiness are no other than

Good Thoughts, Good Words and Good Deeds. Then God shall reign supreme everywhere, eternal springtime shall pitch its tent in the center of the world and the Spiritual Age shall be ushered in for the enjoyment of mankind.'

"This is the ultimate annihilation of the Kingdom of Evil by the Kingdom of Good, and this is what the ignorant peasants whisper to each other—especially when they are heavily taxed—just to extenuate their miseries."

"Prince of Night!" the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher said after listening to him with much interest, "Out of your own mouth you have pronounced your doom!"

"My doom?"

"Yes, your doom. The time for the overflowing of the River of Na-mordany is drawing near!"

"That is what they always say—the peasants, the prisoners, the slaves: 'The time for the overflowing of Na-mordany is drawing near!' It will be next year, and when next year comes around and nothing happens, it will be another year. And so on and on to the end of time, to the defeat of the Cause of Good and the glorification of the Cause of the Devil! And who could ever imagine that a little, insignificant stream could increase to such an extent as to wash away the sins of the Evil One? Hope! Hope! Hope!"

"Man lives on hope!"

"I live on facts!"

"I tell you—I am feeding you with facts."

Then the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher turned His gaze upon me, and looking fixedly into my eyes, He said:

"Have you ever heard the legend that when Angels bathe in the River of Na-mordany, they will be able to soar through the air? Have you? Have you?" And still He looked at me.

"I have heard of it," the Prince of Night answered, rising, "but not being an Angel, I have never tried it."

As I followed Doshman-shab to the door, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher looked at me again and said:

"Try it!"

And I bowed my head in obedience to His command.

In the days that followed, under the guise of official business, I spent as many hours as I could spare among the peasants, the farmers, the artisans and the tillers of the soil as well as among the prisoners and captives and I inquired from all of them about the River of Na-mordany. At first, taking me for a spy of His Majesty, the Devil, many of them were uncommunicative and suspicious, but when I had succeeded in convincing them of my good faith, they became confidential and recited for my benefit preternatural tales and extraordinary legends of millions and millions of Angels who were to descend from the Heavens to defeat the Prince of Night and to establish the Kingdom of Light on Earth; lurid accounts, exaggerated of course, of the River of Na-mordany, which was to rise in tempestuous floods to drown the Devil and his crew and to cleanse all men from sin and corruption. Several enthusiasts, regardless of risk, were willing to guide me to the river, but surrounded as I was by spies, I could not undertake such an excursion without jeopardizing the lives of the remnant of the Army of Light. So I waited and watched for the right opportunity.

A piece of good luck advanced me one step in the development of my plan when one morning I was called upon to report immediately to the Prince of Night.

As I entered the hall, I found him in the act of beating a servant, who was cringing before him and begging for

forgiveness. I learned that this was the Chief Cook and that he was being chastised for having served at a state banquet some tasteless and unsavory dishes.

Now, of all the things in the world, the Devil loves his stomach best. He is an epicure par excellence and would sacrifice his kingdom, not for a horse, but for a good dinner. The gourmet and the Devil are brothers at heart and get along famously. In parenthesis, I may state at this time that my grandmother had taught me as a child the mysterious processes of Oriental cooking and that I was competent at any moment to prepare the most delicate and aromatic dishes, worthy of the table of a king. On a number of occasions, I had been hired, I mean "invited," by private families and moving picture magnates and stars to prepare and serve Persian dinners. Their guests had appreciated my strange concoctions, and I have yet to find the person who does not unbend to my cooking.

In brief, when I saw that the Prince of Night was in such a rage and distemper over the shortcomings of his cook, I knelt before him and declared that, if such were his pleasure, I could prepare for him a Persian dinner such as he had never eaten before, and no sooner had he heard this, than he told me to go ahead and show what I could do, saying that if I fulfilled his expectation, he would give me a permanent position as his "chef de cuisine."

When I left the audience chamber, I walked directly to the royal kitchen and took possession of it. The first thing that I did was to send for my Vagabonds, and together we cooked and served such a sumptuous, such a delicious dinner that all the Devils cried out for more and hung on each other's necks for sheer delight. For the first time, we really won their hearts—through their stomachs, and we were

brought in triumph to the dining-hall and exhibited to the guests as though we were prized Bengal tigers or white bears from the North Pole.

Incidentally, we ourselves, for the first time since our captivity in Zamestan, had a good, square meal, but before touching one bite or even sitting down at the table, we sent away baskets of food to as many of the prisoners as we could reach.

After that night we could have lived on, and probably died in the Devil's kitchen, had we been satisfied with our position. It was good to reach the stores of plenty, to us who had suffered such terrible hardships, and we might have lapsed into a self-indulgent coma, but we did not.

Having observed on my rounds of the prisons and mines countless sick and wounded captives who were groaning on their wretched cots, with no one to attend to their wants, I requested the Prince of Night to allow me to organize a corps of doctors and helpers. He at first had many objections to such a plan, but one by one I explained them all away until he found himself agreeing with me and allowing me to do what I wanted. So Sehhat-deh, the physician from Arcturus, was set free and given complete charge of the plan. He, with his wisdom and skill, organized within a short period of time a most efficient band of "Good Samaritans" from among the prisoners, which soon was performing miracles of healing. Even a number of the Devils who had the makings of angelic hearts became "Good Samaritans" and were seen everywhere attending to the sick. Consequently, Sehhat-deh and his nurses were permitted to include the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher in their visits. They dressed His wounds, and ere long we heard that He had recovered completely.

Then another piece of good luck tumbled into our path, showing that the Spirit was moving us onward toward some unknown destiny. One night, after serving a royal repast to the Prince of Night and his exotic Consort, I noticed that they were bored and out of sorts—he slouching moodily, with his long, ghastly face cupped in his hands, and she in voluptuous lassitude, encoiled beside him, and inspired with a sudden thought, I knelt at their feet and said:

"Your Majesties! I know of many actors, actresses, musicians, dancers, singers and artists of all kinds among the captives who would be able, within a short period of time, to produce for your amusement magical ballets, musical extravaganzas, comedies, farces, tragedies, plays, romances, ad infinitum. If His Majesty would release the persons whom I shall name, and whose good behavior I can guarantee, I promise a wonderful festival—something which will drive away the ennui which has settled over the Court and infuse into it new life, new vivacity, new devilishness and drollery."

The Prince and his Consort were delighted with my suggestion, and they jumped from their thrones, clapped their hands, patted me on the back and cried aloud that I was a jolly old Devil, and they kept repeating it over and over again, until the whole Court took it up:

"He is a jolly old Devil!

O he is a jolly old Devil!

O yes, he is a good jolly old Devil!

Good jolly old Devil!

Good jolly old Devil!"

After the Prince had quieted them, he announced that he would not be deprived of me for half of his kingdom!

It was a pity that I was such an excellent cook, for otherwise he would make me his Prime Minister!

Think of it—to be Prime Minister to the Devil! That is a position which many a person would aspire to and would sell his soul to gain. And I could have had it for nothing, if only I were not such a good cook!

The next day, I called on His Majesty, and in order to form a "Company of Entertainers for the Imperial Court," I requested him to sign orders of release for the Letters of the First Word of Unity and for quite a large number of the common Soldiers of Light. Of course, I could not ask freedom for Del Aram, as this would have made Zolmani too suspicious and would probably have wrecked my scheme.

My Vagabonds served the papers and returned to my apartment, which was situated in a wing of the Royal Palace, with my collegues and the Soldiers of Light. It was good to see them once more—free! Since I had been able to supply them with food from the Royal Kitchen, they had picked up in health and looked again their old selves.

After we had embraced each other, I presented to them my plan, and told them to fall into line and arrange an entertainment of devilish character for the Court of the Prince of Night and his Queen. I delivered to Bazi-del blank orders which gave access to the imperial wardrobe where the necessary costumes for the actors, dancers, singers and "supers" could be obtained, and in parting, I appointed him "Chairman of the Devil's Amusement Company," which title alone imposed upon him responsibilities of a very high order. Then, taking Jahan-nama and Tasveer-kash with me, I left them all to their rehearsals.

In the afternoon at a garden party, I introduced my

two friends to the royal couple and to the nobility of the Court, saying:

"Your Majesties! Lords and Ladies! These two gentlemen, by the names of Jahan-nama and Tasveer-kash, are from the planets, Uranus and Neptune. One is a peerless painter, the other a sculptor beyond compare. I have seen much of their work and heartily recommend them to your patronage. I would consider it an irreparable loss to future ages if the devilish likenesses of your Majesties and the diabolical images of the members of this Court were not preserved on canvass and in marble. Likewise, at this time, the royal bratlings are at a most impish age, and it would be a crying shame if the precocious portraits of these 'enfants terribles' were not perpetuated. Therfore, I hope that in order to set a standard for future generations of Devils, you will all give sittings to our guest-artists, so that they may eternalize you as the positive symbols of the Kingdom of Darkness to the glory of the Prince of Night for ever and ever more!"

That very night, the Angels of the Stars presented their Program of Entertainment before the Devils of the Earth, and completely and unconditionally won the applause of the whole Court and the unstinted praise of Doshman-shah and his Queen.

Azad-pa gave the "Dance of the Seven Sins," the "Dance of the Temptations of the Devil," the "Dance of the Hissing Serpent" and the "Dance of the Leaping Flames of Hell."

Shahnaz-nour sang a number of villainous, shocking and infernal songs of depravity and desolation.

Ahang-zan played weird tom-tom ululations of savage saxaphone syncopations—a wild, barbaric march of splendor and of shame.

Bazi-del presented a dramatic play of pungent and sarcastic dialogue, portraying the foolish assurance of the Army of Light, their unaccountable egotism and conceit, their uncalled-for pretensions and their defeat by the Prince of Night and his cohorts of Devils.

As an epilogue, he staged a mammoth spectacle of the drowning of the World of Light by the slow envelopment of the Veils of Darkness.

Now the Earth was sunk in the bosom of Night-icy, spectral gloom covering all.

Silence . . . Pause . . .

Then over everything appeared the shadowy figures of the Evil Ones, shrilling their victory, while from the Pit of Tareekee were heard the heart-rending cries and lamentations of the Soldiers of Light.

Then the Triumph of the Forces of Evil!

The Glorification of the Deceitful Lord!

The Enthronement of the King of Lies in the Kingdom of Zamestan!

After this performance, my Vagabonds and I were allowed an even greater amount of freedom, though we were still the Devil's slaves and constantly watched by spies—were we to make one slip, we would be thrown back into the prisons and the pits, and treated worse than ever. Zolmani stood by and saw us forging ahead in the estimation of the Prince of Night. He wondered what we were up to, for he was too clever not to surmise that there was some treachery back of our clownish antics, but so long as we interpreted conscientiously, cooked perfectly and entertained cleverly, he could make no complaint, and we were left to our own wits.

Step by step, carefully studying every move, I had organized such an elaborate system that Hakim Hakimian himself would have been impressed. It was too flawless to go wrong. With the Devils, I had played the Devils' game, and I believed that I had outwitted them—outstripped them by a million miles. My plan was hidden, consummate, skilful, and I felt that there would be no hitch in it. I thought in my mind of every possible contingency before taking a single step.

Then suddenly, and out of a clear sky, the time arrived.

There was a camp of prison-laborers in the vicinity of the River of Na-mordany, and one morning several of their gang-masters arrived at Court with wild and lurid stories of how the prisoners had broken their fetters and risen against the state and that there was what one might call an incipient insurrection.

While the gang-masters were waiting for instructions, the Prince of Night sent for me, and the following dialogue ensued:

"You have proved yourself efficient and useful."

"I have tried my best to serve you, my lord."

"I am pleased with all that you have done and am thinking of promoting you to a higher position in the Court, for beside your own duties, you have been able to settle many disputes between various factions to the credit of yourself and to the peace and prosperity of my Empire."

"I thank you for your confidence and I hope that it is not misplaced."

"Misplaced? Never! I know my jealous courtiers hate you and that every day they are planning your downfall. I have received many reports against you because you have

tried to serve me and have earned the title of "Peace-maker," but these I laugh at and throw away. A peace-maker is what I need in my Kingdom more than anything else. There must be no insurrection, no revolution, no independence, no freedom! All these are bad symptoms, and the more I hear of such disturbances the more I rejoice in the fact that at least there is one who knows how to quell their slumbering fires. You have earned the title of Peace-maker, have you not?"

"Yes, my lord! They call me 'the Peace-maker of the Hellish Crew'."

He laughed.

"That is good! That is good! Now I want you to apply your peace-making talents to some other part of my Empire."

"I am ready to serve you under all circumstances."

"Do you remember, your Prophet, in my interview with him, asked me about the name of a river?"

"It was Na-mordany. I could never forget it."

"Oh, you remember it then?" he asked in a rather startled voice.

"Of course, my lord. The river was connected with some old woman's legend."

"True. You frightened me at first. I thought that you believed in it."

"I believe in such rubbish! Do you remember, the Prophet said, that if an Angel bathed in it, he would be able to fly and he wished you to try it?'"

"Well, now you have a chance to go there and bathe in it yourself, if you wish."

"May I, my lord? I think I will."

"Here is the problem—one of my prison—camps is situ-

ated in the vicinity of that river, and word has come to me that the prisoners have raised the standard of rebellion against the authorities. I wish you to go there immediately and to warn them of my displeasure."

"I will, my lord." My heart was beating fast.

"Would it not be well to take my kitchen-boys along with me?" I asked.

"Yes," he answered after a pause. "Take them along with you."

Then, as I was leaving, he called after me:

"Don't forget to bathe in the River of Na-mordany!"

"Prince of Night, I shall not forget!"

And again he cried:

"And let your kitchen-boys bathe in it, too. They may need it!"

"Your command shall be obeyed, my lord!"

And as I left the presence of the Prince of Slavery, a star-song of Freedom leapt from the depths of my soul and ascended to the depths of the sky!

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THE RIVER OF NA-MORDANY

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കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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Chapter XXV

THE RIVER OF NA-MORDANY

"THE Vagabonds are on their way to bathe in the River of Na-mordany!"

I sent this laconic message by the careful hand of Seh-hat-deh to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. And to Del Aram and all the captive-soldiers of Light I despatched the following:

> "Be of good cheer and await the deliverance of your Lord."

Since the first days of our captivity, I had been teaching my Vagabonds the mechanism of the heavens, the exact location of the habitable planets and the pass-words which the governments of those globes had given us to be used in case of desperate need. I had to impress upon their minds the supreme importance of knowing these magical phrases by heart. It was here that memory was called upon to function as one of the great categories of the mind. In order to facilitate the task, I divided the heavens into eighteen parts, alloting to each Vagabond one section. The Supreme Star I reserved for myself.

Each Vagabond was supposed to visit every planet in the vast tract confided to him, at every one of which he was to get into direct touch with the authorities, use the pass-word and relate the story of our defeat by the Powers of

Darkness. He was then to ask for immediate assistance, and without taking rest, was to fly from one to another of these planets until his list was completed. I told them that the Concentration Camp of the Inter-stellar Armies of the Firmament would be in and around the planet Mars. From that field of reconnaissance, we would direct our forces against the Empire of Zamestan.

Mars was the only planet from which we had received no pass-word as the Powers of Darkness had been in full possession of that globe, but I requested one of my Vagabonds to include it in his rounds, so that Sar-sar might marshal the few regiments of the Army of Light which he could command and join the rest of us in the deliverance of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher from the hands of the Prince of Night.

While in captivity in the Kingdom of Zamestan, I would take my Vagabonds every night to the top of a mountain in the vicinity of Tar-ankabout, and there I would point out to each one, the positions of the visible planets assigned to him, and having studied Hakim Hakimian's chart in the Universal University, I could also designate the location of those Stars which could not be detected from the Earth.

It took me some time to teach hese pupils of mine, for they were Vagabonds from the Runaway Stars, and could not very easily understand the actions of the well-behaved globes who journeyed age in and age out along the same monotonous orbits, without deviating one hair's breadth from their predestined paths. They thought that this system was a cruel tyranny imposed upon innocent planets by some omnipotent Slave-driver. Couldn't the Stars have some fun? Who claimed them to these unalterable rules? It was quite evident that if these globes were forced by some unseen,

unknown, unknowable, and inexorable law to such eternal servitude, their inhabitants also must be fettered and bound and forever unable to hold any claim to real, untramelled freedom. And of these globes, blindly cutting a predetermined path through the limitless space, and of their blind populations, irresistably forced along with them, the Vagabonds would ask me: "Can the blind lead the blind, and if so, shall they not both fall into the ditch?"

And, as though all these irrelevant irreverencies were insufficient, they would become bold and suspicious and try to divest me of my own self-given title of Vagabond—for was I not a slave of the Earth and its laws, and how then could I rule over the Vagabond Freemen of the Wandering Stars?

My policy was never to oppose them but to accept all their arguments with several loads of salt. Once they had had their own way in some things, they would yield to my invisible authority in others, and for me this was enough.

In time, they learned the positions of the Stars so well and knew the pass-words so perfectly that I felt that it was safe to place in their hands the destiny of my race. As Vagabonds, they at first lacked steadiness of aim and continuity of purpose, but I, while being as they claimed not essentially one of them, having in my character something of the sturdiness of a slave, taught them, step by step, the prerequisites of steadfastness and tenacity and the ability of holding to one thing, and one thing alone, until it succeeded or it failed.

And now—the Vagabonds and I were on our way to the River of Na-mordany! All along the road we met excited bands of farmers, knots of peasants, groups of rebellious prisoners and roving companies of revolutionaries, all

of whom imparted to us in rapid, voluble language the strange and fascinating news that the River of Na-mordany had overflowed its banks! In that part of the country torrents of rain had been descending for weeks and numerous tributary streams were pouring their waters into the already swollen River. Thus, distorted by fresh and ever-increasing supplies, Na-mordany had become a raging flood, sweeping everything before it, and driving the farmers away from their villages and homes. Never in the memory of the oldest living inhabitant had such havoc and devastation been witnessed.

As we penetrated further into the interior of the country, the agitated and violent crowd increased in number for the innumerable prison-camps were now disbanded, the overseers having fled for their lives.

Many of the mines, in which large gangs of laborers had been employed, and which happened to be in the pathway of the torrent, were inundated, and the miners who had been fortunate enough to escape added their numbers to the excited population. To us all this appeared as the end of the world—bedlam and resurrection combined, and the distracted people seemed to sense the same thing and they ran hither and thither, crying:

This is the Time of the End!
The End of the Devil's Kingdom!
Prophecies are being fulfilled!
Lord! Have mercy upon us!
Lord! Save us from the flood!
Lord! Send down Thy promised Angels!
Lord! We are Thine! Thine!
Lord! We are Thy Soldiers of Light!
Send to us our brothers and sisters!

These last cries were familiar to us, and to our amazement and joy we discerned among the mob countless of our own Soldiers of Light, who had been forced out of the mines by the rush of the waters. With my Vagabonds about me I ascended a hill and together we sang the Song of the Caravan which had been written for us by Atash-bar. The Soldiers of Light knew it well, and as we sang, from all parts of the shuffling and confused crowd, the voices of our comrades arose, blending with ours into one mighty chorus of thanksgiving.

Then when the last note had died away they separated themselves from the distracted inhabitants and made a rush for the hill. Oh, what a reunion it was! But, cutting short the interchange of heartfelt greetings, I commissioned them to assemble the excited groups of men and women into orderly camps, and the presence among them of these experienced and illumined beings now revitalized with hope, reassured the people, who for the first time felt that their future was in strong, tender and protecting hands.

This was spiritual leadership of the very first order!

To one who had witnessed the frightful confusion, the perplexity, the scramble, the turmoil and the chaotic state of the wild population, the change into regularity and self-confidence seemed like a miracle.

With their possessions which had been carried on their own backs as well as on those of every available animal, a little, happy tented city was born, as if by magic. A "Committee of Vigilance" was organized to administer justice, to enforce general peace in the camp and to care for the poor and the helpless, and a constabulary regiment was also created to supervise the administration of the Laws of the

Heavens, which we then and there began to promulgate among the people. We gave to the city the name of "Tazeh-Shahr."

In this manner did we put things into shape, and then we departed, leaving the community in the hands of the Soldiers of Light.

As we continued our journey toward the River of Namordany, we met ever-increasing bands of excited people, and these we directed, each and every one, to the "Concentration Camp" of the Army of Light. All were awaiting the descent of the Angels and the literal fulfillment of the prophecies—the End of the Kingdom of Evil and the Establishment of the Kingdom of the Good.

I could now easily imagine the consternation which would reign in the Palace of the Prince of Night. Of late, he had had many dreams which the prophets of his empire had not dared to interpret, for they had all seen in them the doom of his dynasty—the end of the Old and the beginning of the New.

At last we reached our destination. The torrent of Namordany was flowing unrestrained. Thundering cataracts from the surrounding canyons and gorges bore upon it from every side. The rain was sweeping down in swirling sheets and the sky was rent to pieces by living branches of fire. I could see no indication of the abatement of the flood.

These mad contortions of the elements did not disturb us in the least, and casting aside our prison garb, we gripped each other's hands, and repeating the phrase which we had said a thousand times—"We shall meet at the frontier of Mars!" we leapt into the flood.

The surging waves carried us along, helpless fragments of life. Now dashed to the very river-bed, now driven upward

to the seething surface, we kept our mental balance. A sense of etherealization began to take possession of our bodies—a power almost forgotten. Soon we were breasting the waves with confidence, striking out for the opposite shore, and suddenly we felt firm ground under out feet. We gained the bank, and here we stood a moment, exhilerated, unfatigued, and repeating again the cry of rendezvous—"The frontier of Mars!" we rose easily into the air.

For the present, heavenly sight-seeing had lost its charm for me, and I gazed neither to the right nor to the left, but steadily ploughed the starry fields toward my destination. At last I sighted the Supreme Star, and in less than the twinkling of an eye, I was soaring over the City of the Heavens. Its peaceful panorama and familiar landmarks were spread beneath my eyes. I could see the buildings of the Universal University, its dormitories and laboratories. I could locate the vast piles of the Libraries of the Stars. But none of these sights held me. Exhausted by my long and rapid flight, I was aiming directly for Mohabbat-abad, and in less time than it takes to say it, I landed at the gates of the Presidential Palace.

The gatekeeper recognized me and was astonished.

"Where is Faravan-taher?"

"He is attending a cabinet meeting."

"Take me to him at once!"

The gatekeeper saw that something terrific had happened, and without announcing my name, ushered me in.

Faravan-taher was standing at the head of the table, around which were ranged the Members of the Cabinet. Afsar-shad was sitting by his side. As I entered the room, the President stopped in the middle of a sentence, staring at me with amazement in his eyes and the others, noting the

sudden change in his expression, turned around. There I stood, glued to the spot, unable to utter a word, defeat written all over me. Then globes of hot tears began to roll down my cheeks and I sank exhausted to the floor. Afsar-shad with heavenly sympathy hurried to my side, and when I had regained my voice, I told them the story of the treachery of Zolmani, of our defeat, our shame and our slavery, and when with horror and terpidation I described of the wounds which our Blessed Teacher had received from the hand of the Prince of Night, they would not hear me further but filled the Presidential Palace with their loud lamentations. Pale, shaken, his eyes blazing with indignation, Faravan-taher addressed them, and oh how his voice trembled, trembled like the leaves of a tree before the blowing of a hurricane!

"Gentlemen! You have heard enough! What is your decision?"

As one man they arose and thundered across the hall:

"War! War! War! War! War!"

"I pledge the life of every man on the Supreme Star!" Faravan-taher declared.

"And the life of every woman!" echoed Afsar-shad.

It happened that the Universal Parliament of the Supreme Star was at the moment in session, and Faravan-taher took me before that august assemblage.

Word had already flown to all directions that the Vagabond was back with news of disaster, and all the seats in the Parliament Building were occupied by intent and anxious listeners. I was asked to give an account of the Celestial Expedition and my heart poured out a flood of burning words. I cannot now remember what I said nor what I

did, but the atmosphere became surcharged with electricity and vibrant with life. The faces looked into mine with rapt attention. The hearts reflected my own anguish. There was not one dry eye in that vast assemblage. Their Great Teacher, their Beloved Lord was wounded by the darts of the enemy! When they heard this, they arose in wild confusion—confusion such as the eyes of the Stars had never before witnessed. Again I could not go on.

Members leapt from their seats, tearing their clothes, weeping, lamenting. I had never imagined such grief. Then they began to cry:

War! War! War!
Declare war against Kesh-makesh!
We shall annihilate Kesh-makesh!
We shall wipe it off the map of the sky!
Kesh-makesh shall be no more!
War! War! War!
War on the Forces of Darkness!
War on the Prince of Night!
War on Zolmani and his dastardly accomplices!

The building was shaken with their defiance.

Then automatically a procession was formed, and pushing me at its head, they marched through the streets and boulevards of the City of the Heavens.

War! War! War!

The tocsin of War had sounded on the Supreme Star as never before!

The news of the wounding of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had spread like wild fire. Rumor had it that He was crucified and His Eighteen Letters of Unity martyred.

I never knew until then the extent to which the Spirit

of the Worlds' Teacher was adored by the people of the Supreme Star.

And Hakim Hakimian, their beloved Astronomer, dead

And Bazi-del, the Dramatist of the Sky, dead!

And Pasand-bana, the incomparable Architect, dead!

Lord! There was no power in the whole Universe to assuage their grief and to stop the rising flood of their despair.

Vast processions were formed in the streets, crying for war, thirsting for war against the Forces of Evil which had wrought such havoc.

Then the newspapers appeared with great headlines:

"Declare War on Kesh-makesh!"

"This is the People's War against the Prince of Wickedness!"

Within twenty-four hours, the armies of the Supreme Star were mobilized.

Within twenty-four hours, radio messages and psychophotographic news were pouring in from all the Stars announcing that their governments had declared war against Kesh-makesh.

Once more the Vagabonds had done their job perfectly!

I was proud of them.

The plan had worked! There had not been one hitch in it.

Communications began to arrive from Alpha Centauri, Aldebaran, Sirius, Altair, Betegeuse, Antares, Arcturus, Canopus, Vega, Capella, from the planets of our solar system and from thousands of other globes, asking for information and directions.

The Vagabonds had delivered their messages in good order. Well done, my good and faithful Vagabonds! The

Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher will be pleased with you, and that will be your greatest reward.

I received messages from every one of them informing me that they had completed their task and that the Armies of the Stars were mobilized and ready to march upon the Prince of Night.

Through television, radio and wireless communications, the Governments of the planets expressed the desire that the Democracy of the Supreme Star (because it had been the last abode of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher) should take leadership in this Universal Campaign, and Faravantaher, accepting the offer, appointed Gor-Gor—

GENERALISSIMO OF THE INTER-STELLAR ARMIES OF THE UNIVERSE!

After the exchange of notes between the different Foreign Offices, the Allied and the Associated Governments of the Inter-stellar Universe proclaimed the following joint Declaration of War against Kesh-makesh:

1. We, the Democracies and the Peoples of the Stars, declare a state of war between ourselves and Kesh-makesh.

2. We do not wage war against the peace-loving, non-combatant population of Kesh-makesh nor against the followers of the Good Law nor against those who think Good Thoughts, speak Good Words and perform Good Deeds—the worshippers of the Light. Such persons are immune from our weapons and our arms will not harm them.

3. We shall wage war relentlessly against the Powers, Kingdoms, Dominions, Sovereignties and Principalities of Darkness and Evil and against their Kings, Rulers, Princes, Courtiers and Nobles of Night.

4. We shall wage war continuously, uninterruptedly, and

unremittingly against all the Principles of Evil Deeds—the Deceitful Lords of Kesh-makesh, until such time and such period as their powers are annihilated, their standards lowered, their influence destroyed and their very names lost forever.

5. We shall wage war until we have freed the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher—the Fountain-head of the Civilizations of the Globes, the True Exemplar of the Majesty of our God, the Living Source of all our Inspiration, the Founder of the Universal University and the Lord of the Army of Light. We shall wage war until He is freed and sitting on the Throne of Everlasting Day and holding in His hand the key to the future destiny of Kesh-makesh.

6. We shall wage war until we have freed our compatriots, the Citizens of the Stars, the Soldiers of the Army of Light.

7. We shall wage war until such time and such period as the Universal Democracy of Kesh-makesh is inaugurated by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher.

8. We, the Democracies and the Peoples of the Stars, do hereby solemnly declare Zolmani an outlaw, the Arch-enemy of the Humanities of the Globes, the Wicked One, the False Speaker, the Destroyer of the Army of Light, the Traitor to the Cause of Justice, Right and Freedom and the Demon of the demons. And we do hereby solemnly agree to mete out to him the most exemplary punishment, that it may have a deterrent effect on all other traitors to the Cause of Truth and Light.

9. In order to carry into practice the above joint resolutions, we, the Democracies and the Peoples of the Stars, do hereby pledge our combined resources, our individual possessions and our lives.

A general review of the Army of the Supreme Star was held on the Plain of Firdaus before Faravan-taher and Afsar-shad.

Afterwards, I asked Gor-Gor the number of the divisions, and in a deprecating manner, he answered:

"For the present we have one million regiments, each consisting of five hundred thousand soldiers."

"My God! They will swallow up Kesh-makesh!" I said to myself, thinking of the armies of the other Stars.

"We have no time to wait for the recruits," Gor-Gor continued, "which are expected to come in from all parts of the Supreme Star. They will join us later."

Since the early days, when Doust Parast had revealed to us the enormous possibilities of Borag-Reez, great developments along these lines had been going on in all parts of the Universe, and now, at the crucial hour, when its immediate use was a matter of life or death to our cause, this stupendous energy which made easy communication between the globes possible was simultaneously discovered and put in effect by the scientists of the Stars.

Thousands upon thousands of giant aircraft had been held ready to transport the soldiers, and as the sun arose from behind the distant hills, Gor-Gor gave command, and we mounted into the sky.

On our path toward the Earth, massed armies from the different Stars joined us in our sidereal flight. The generals, according to their instructions, reported to Gor-Gor for orders and he assigned to them their respective positions in the coming campaign. My Vagabonds arrived one by one at the head of the armies of the different globes, and oh, how good it was to see them! They related thrilling tales of

their receptions—tales which were very similar to my own experience, as well as heart-harrowing accounts of grief-stricken families and agonized populations, whose sons had fallen before the evil ones, sacrificing their lives for the sake of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and His Cause.

As army after army joined our advancing masses, all the space in the sky seemed to be filled. East and West, North and South, the Starry Hosts possessed the heavens. At last we reached the frontier of Mars—our Concentration Camp. Here I was amazed to find Sar-sar awaiting us at the head of vast legions.

He was prepared for my surprise, and at the very first opportunity, gave us an account of what had transpired on his planet. I will repeat it in his own words:

"After my arrival on Mars, I sought out the shattered and discouraged Soldiers of Light. They were few and far between. In my work of reorganization, I began to put into practice the lessons which I had learned in the Universal University, remembering the words of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher when he handed me my diploma: 'Rely on the Worlds' Holy Spirit and all thy desires will be fulfilled—not by might nor by power, but by my spirit.' Instead of depending on physical power, I availed myself of the Spiritual Energies of the Universe. I called on them to help me in my campaign against the incarnate Forces of War and Evil. I began to inspire the hearts with courage and to instil the souls with unflinching resolution. We fought our enemies with the Weapons of the Spirit. Then I sent out my followers over the land to sow these seeds in fertile soil. It did not take very long before the people themselves were innately illumined. They became aware of the reality of the Powers of Light and Good and of the

unreality of the Forces of Darkness and Evil. They lost confidence in their governors and rulers, and ere I was myself fully conscious of it, the Army of Light had achieved a bloodless, smokeless, noiseless, spiritual revolution. Then the entire population inaugurated a new Era of Peace and made between Themselves a compact of eternal friendship."

I was lost in amazement.

"And do the people know who was responsible for these things?" I asked Sar-sar.

"No. They do not need to. The important thing was to achieve the object, and that was done," he answered.

I bowed down before him and kissed his hands.

"Sar-sar! You are the Master of Spirit and I would not be surprised if the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher decided to establish His Universal University on Mars! It is more entitled to it than is the Earth."

And as I said this, my heart was torn in twain and a cry of anguish escaped me for I could not help but compare the purity of Sar-sar's intentions with my own ever-contriving mind. Here was he, returning single-handed to his war-ridden world, alone, with insurmountable odds against him—an atom before the towering heights of the Himalayas! And then, by the pure power of the Worlds' Holy Spirit, creating a civilization and bringing into life a Celestial Democracy, a Divine Nation, dedicated to Peace. This I had not been able to do for my Earth with all my plottings, all my maneuverings, all my impotent schemings! There must be something essentially wrong with me.

Ah, beloved Sar-sar! Thou the Prophet of the Infinite! Thou hast served thy Lord well, and dost not ask even the reward of recognition. But thy Lord knoweth! He is God and there is no God but He, the Living, the Ever-Con-

scious, the Self-Subsistent! Slumber does not overtake Him nor sleep. That which is in the Heavens and on the Earth, belongs to Him. Who is it that intercedes with Him save by His permission? He knows that which has been before us and that which shall come after us, and we comprehend naught of His knowledge save that which he pleases. His throne extends over the Stars and above the firmament and it tires Him not to guard His Universe, for He is the High, the Omnipotent, the Wise and the All-Merciful!

And ah, Sar-sar! Who can estimate the power and the influence of your single life? Yours is and ever will be one of the purest hearts wherein the Spirit has dwelt! Who can sing the matchless glory of your unsullied success? Who dares to loosen his tongue in your praise? Thousands of years from now, my name will be forgotten and my plots and plans no longer remembered, but immemorially you shall be enshrined in the minds of the spiritual beings of the Universe as one of the Divine Messengers of the all-sufficient power of the Worlds' Holy Spirit. The currents which you have set in motion from the hidden sources of your being and the invisible fountains of your spirit will flow on and on, fertilizing the souls of the inhabitants of the Stars, until by the Decree of Divine Providence, the ultimate triumph of Good over Evil, of Light over Darkness, of Day over Night is achieved with age-abiding glory.

And over the entrance of every temple and on the altar of every heart shall be inscribed the flaming message which you received from the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, as He placed in your hands the Sword of Light:

> "'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit,' saith the Lord."

THE HIGHEST PINNACLE OF GLORY

കേരളസാഹിത്യ അക്കാദമി

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
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Chapter XXVI

THE HIGHEST PINNACLE OF GLORY

AFTER giving the final instructions to the Forces of the Allied and Associated Powers of the Heavens, which were assembled at the Concentration Camp on the frontier of Mars, Gor-Gor, the Generalissimo of the Inter-Stellar Armies of the Universe, issued the order:

"March on Kesh-makesh!"

Each division, under the command of its own general and veteran officers, held itself in readiness for any emergency. Here again Gor-Gor demonstrated his unparalleled genius — directing, co-ordinating and unifying these vast, unnumbered hosts. From the Flagship, Toufan-saken, he issued commands to all parts of the sky and kept in direct contact with the armies of every globe.

This was the first time that the inhabitants of the spheres had been called upon to act in concert, and as I watched them flying toward the Earth, the standard-bearers of each planet carrying beside their own flag a New One—the outward symbol of the Universal Union of the Stars, I could not cease to wonder at the miraculous mind of Gor-Gor, who had mobilized the material and spiritual mass-power of the Universe and co-ordinated the outward and inward energies of the Soldiers of God into one harmonious, homogeneous army.

Squadron after squadron, armada after armada, flotilla after flotilla, the planes of the Forces of Life, Light and Righteousness were winging their way toward the Earth to banish forever from its surface the Powers of Darkness and Death!

And now in reference to ourselves—the Vagabonds of the Stars, we, the Heroes of Heaven and Hell—we had nothing to do! Of course, vagabonds are never supposed to do anything except in a spirit of fun and bravado, and we never took ourselves seriously, for had we done so, we would have been untrue to our calling and consequently unable to accomplish anything. Yet, on the verge of the greatest of all campaigns, we had been given no orders and our names were not listed among either the commissioned or the non-commissioned officers. Had we been reserved for some great climactic achievement? I hoped so. But for the time being, we were as though on furlough and were given carte blanche to do whatsoever we pleased. I feared that it was dangerous, in a strictly military organization, to allow so much freedom to the Vagabonds, but I had great faith in Gor-Gor, and if he wished us to be free, that was in itself discipline.

Therefore, it was good to cavort in the measureless space without the least responsibility and to let others do the work. Can you not see us, besashed, beribboned, debonair, dancing from East to West, from North to South, playing on our instruments and making the Armies of the Stars to laugh?

That was it—making our comrades laugh! That was what the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had told Jameh Zar we were supposed to do! We did it to perfection, but

after a while, time grew heavy on our hands, so I betook myself to Toufan-saken to request of Gor-Gor that we should be given something to do—something definite. I found him in the company of Faravan-taher and Afsar-shad, who had refused to be left behind and were travelling with him on the Flagship. When I had disclosed the object of my visit, he turned to them and asked quizzically:

"Do you think that these swashbucklers of the skies can do anything?

"O, what a title!" Afsar-shad clapped her hands.

"O, what a what?" I asked.

"Didn't you hear?"

"I did, but I could not understand the phrase."

"Swashbucklers of the Skies! I think it is perfect! It just fits you. It is *you*."

I did not know whether to take this as a compliment or otherwise.

"Come, Gor-Gor, and give our Swashbucklers of the Skies something to do," insisted Afsar-shad, laughing.

Gor-Gor motioned me to approach, and said in an undertone:

"I have reserved for you some especial work. You will have to wait." Then he turned to Afsar-shad.

"Let them go out and sing!"

"Anything else, General?" I stood at attention.

"Yes, stamp the skies!"

I retired completely satisfied, and taking a position on the edge of a conspicuous roseate cloud, I blew a loud, resounding note on my horn and called:

"O ye Swashbucklers and Stampers of the Skies!"

Nobody answered and nobody came.

"O ye Vagabonds of the Stars."

In a moment they were all before me.

"I have orders from the General, but did you not hear your new titles?"

"We heard you calling some names, but we did not know that you meant us."

"I did mean you. These titles are given to us by Gor-Gor."

"Tell us again."

"Swashbucklers and Stampers of the Skies!"

"Something like snorting horses?"

"Or caterwauling animals?"

"Or ballyhooers of the Divine Circus?"

"Yes," I answered, "a little of each and yet something more."

"What are we supposed to do?"

"We are ordered to sing."

"I knew it! I knew it!"

"Well, what of it? Don't you want to?"

"Who said we don't want to? We would rather sing than eat, but they don't need to tease us along like children by giving us titles. Swashbucklers and Stampers of the Skies indeed! We were all that from the beginning of creation. We have done nothing else but swashbuckling and stamping and neighing and grunting and braying and squeaking and clacking and buzzing and hissing and croaking and crawing and screeching——'

"Enough! Enough!"

"Why don't you let us finish?"

"You will never finish and we have here something definite to do."

"Well, let us do it! What is it?"

"We are ordered to swashbuckle and stamp."

"Which means?"

"To sing!"

"Haven't we been doing that all the time?"

"Let us do it again, and do it well now!"

"Let us sing for the entertainment of the Armies of God!"

"Let us sing the Song of the Caravan!"

And we began to sing the Song of the Caravan, written by Atash-bar for the Soldiers of the Sky—a martial song, the music of which stirs the blood and arouses the fighting spirit,—and as we sang, the pulses of the soldiers were quickened and their eyes were dilated and their bosoms swelled and their hearts expanded, and we lifted our voices louder and higher and played on our instruments with greater abandon—and thus we led the Armies of the Heavens toward the Earth!

During our absence from the City of Tar-ankabout, various significant events have been taking place. The Prince of Night, Doshman-shab, has had more portentious dreams: A panorama of sky opened before his eyes, revealing endless legions in shining armour descending upon him from every quarter. Another dream was that of a hand-to-hand fight with a brother-demon, who was pushing him against a wall, tearing at his flesh with gory teeth and strangling the life out of his body. Waking at dawn, bathed in an icy sweat, shrieking in panic and fear, he sends for the soothsayers and magicians of his realm and swears a mighty oath that unless they interpret these dreams, their lives will be forfeited. After consulting among themselves, one of the soothsayers comes forward and speaks in a trembling voice:

"May the life of your Majesty endure forever! All of us

are well aware of two distinct prophecies which have come to us from ages past—handed down, in whispered tones, from generation to generation. The first is in regard to the River of Na-mordany, the overflowing of which will herald the end of this dynasty; and the second fortells the appearance of hosts of Angels from the Heavens who will annihilate the Powers of Darkness. The army which your Majesty has seen may be that same army the descent of which has been predicted since the beginning of time."

Doshman-shab is carried away by transports of tempestuous rage. He does not wait for the explanation of the second dream, but orders the immediate execution of all the magicians. The poor wretches call on Father Satan and swear that they have interpreted according to the science bequeathed to them by their elders, but all to no avail.

While the executioners are making ready their swords, a messenger rushes wildly into the court with the news that the river of Na-mordany has overflowed its banks, that its waters have inundated large districts, flooding the mines and dispersing the peasants and prisoners in all directions! In the confusion that ensues the soothsayers are forgotten and manage to escape.

Then a band of distracted Devils follows in the wake of the messenger, bringing the news that in the city of Tazeh-shahr a new government has been proclaimed by the Soldiers of Light, that they have raised a new standard, are gathering around them all the frantic inhabitants and are announcing that Angels are about to descend from the Heavens to bring deliverance and to destroy the Kingdom of Zamestan.

On the top of all these startling reports, a number of officers arrive post-haste, and prostrating themselves before

Doshman-shab, pour into his ears the most unbelievable and unreasonable story of a group of prisoners who, casting off their clothes, had entered the torrential Na-mordany, and swimming like fish across its foaming expanse, had landed unharmed on the other side, where rising from the ground, they had soared upward and disappeared into the sky.

Doshman-shab is stupefied and remains speechless, not knowing what to do in the face of this succession of perplexing disasters. This gives Zolmani time to remind him of a number of things:

"From the beginning, I have warned you against that wily interpreter—that cook, that entertainer, that what-not, and have stated emphatically that untold calamities would befall all of us if you ever believed in his cock-and-bull stories, but you would not listen to me, and now this is the result!"

"Please don't scold me, Zolmani! It does not help us in the least. You must do something! My mind is dead—it does not work. We must do something!"

"Otherwise your kingdom will be utterly and irreparably lost."

Doshman-shab recalls his interview with the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and the recent disappearance of the Vagabonds. Then aloud:

"Zolmani! Do you think that the Prophet meant it when he said that an angel who had bathed in Na-mordany would be able to fly?"

"Did he say that?" shrieked Zolmani. "To whom did he say it?"

"He said it to me through the Interpreter."

"O Kingdom of Erebus! O Father Pandemonium! We

are undone! We are undone!" Zolmani moans from the depths of his heart. Then to Doshman-shab!

"Dunce! Blockhead! What a cheap Devil you are! Don't you know that the Prophet was speaking for the benefit of the Interpreter? Don't you realize that those who soared toward the sky were your precious cook and his scullions, that armies of Angels and Spirits may descend upon us at any minute, that they are already on their way? O, Devil! We are lost, forever lost! Both of us are doomed, forever doomed, and there is no way of escape! Where could we escape to?"

"But let us do something. We *must* do something. You have always been resourceful. We defeated the Teacher. Don't you think we can defeat the disciples? Let us do something!"

"Yes, you are right! We must do something."

Zolmani begins to think, and within a few minutes, he has evolved his plan. He rises, towering high over the head of Doshman-shab, and speaks to him as to a useless and hopeless Devil. While in the past his manner has been conciliatory and submissive, he now takes an unmistakably aggressive attitude:

"Call out the super-fleet with all the paraphernalia of aerial warfare, and I will lead them toward the upper spheres and give battle to the Forces of the Heavens! Maybe, who knows, maybe the spirits of my ancestors will give me another victory, and if we defeat them this time, we shall rule not only the Earth, but shall extend our Empire to every globe in the immeasurable expanse of the sky! O, Father Satan! Strengthen our arms in thy unholy cause! We are thy children and we are consecrating our all to thee! O, Father Satan! Listen to our plea!"

During this invocation, Doshman-shab crouches abjectly at the feet of his ally, and when it is finished, Zolmani turns to him and enumerates his instructions:

"While I am fighting in the sky, you shall mobilize all the land forces of the Kingdom of Zamestan and advance on Tazeh-shahr, this new city founded by the freed Soldiers of Light, and raze it to the ground. Do you hear me, Doshman-shab? Do not leave one soul alive—not one alive—do not let one escape! Put to the sword all those who have gathered around their standard. Burn their Camp-city. Do not leave one trace of it—not one trace of it—on the map! But if anything goes wrong in Tazeh-shahr, and there is much likelihood of this, leave your army to its fate and hasten back to the Capital, where you will deal with the Teacher. Now may Father Satan grant that you on the ground and I in the air may scatter our enemies to the four winds and rule—we two—over the Earth and the starry Heavens—establishing a universal Kingdom of War, Rapine, Pillage, Rape and Slavery! And now we part—you to fight the enemies of Darkness on Earth, and I to war with the adversaries of Evil in the Sky! Farewell! May we succeed! May we succeed!"

And now the Super-fleet of the Kingdom of Zamestan, commanded by Zolmani, rises toward the heavens, prepared to give desperate battle to the Armies of the Stars, while Doshman-shab, having mobilized all the available forces of his Empire, marches toward Tazeh-shahr, the Camp-City of the Army of Light.

Meanwhile, the waters of Na-mordany possess wider and ever wider areas, and the plains and valleys surrounding

Tazeh-shahr have become a mass of raging and turbulent flood. The city is overcrowded by the hourly arrival of new refugees, some having swum for miles to reach this haven of safety whose lofty situation has so far protected it from the encroaching devastation.

The Soldiers of Darkness are now on their way to Tazeh-shahr, but their progress is blocked by the flood which is rapidly spreading toward the Capital. Doshman-Shah summons his sorcerers, who cause clouds of steam to rise from the waters. These settle into a vast, solid floor, extending far and wide over the swirling torrent. Rank upon rank, the soldiers mount upon it, while it ever unrolls beneath their marching feet. Relentlessly they advance, borne on their carpet of steam, which as they reach the hill of Tazeh-shahr, divides into two equal parts, half on the right and half on the left, and still advances, until it meets itself on the other side—and the citadel is surrounded! Simultaneously, the order to fire resounds from every quarter, while the Soldiers of Light, with the peasants and refugees huddled behind them, stand ready to die desperately.

O Thou Lord of Power and Dominion! With Thine invincible Hosts, descend from Thy Shining Kingdom and reinforce the remnant of Thine Army of Light! They are encircled by the Legions of Darkness and have no guardian save Thee, no champion beside Thee and no friend except Thee!

It was at this time when we, the Vagabonds, were leading the Armies of the Stars with song and music toward the Earth, that the enemy fleet in battle-array of a sudden hove into view and rapidly advanced upon us. Gor-Gor commanded the Army to remain stationary and to allow the

foe to fire the first shot. The forces of Zolmani were now drawn up before us, as motionless as our own.

An unnerving period of silence and ominous inactivity ensued. It seemed that it lasted ages and that it would never end. At last the Soldiers of Darkness opened fire, and poured upon the Flotilla of Light a deluge of bullets which, however, did not reach us, but instead turned back upon their own men, causing great havoc and destruction. Then they hurled upon us an avalanche of hand grenades, which, exploding in mid-air, diffused clouds of venomous gas. Strange to say, the gas was unable to permeate the atmosphere in which we were floating, but folded back upon itself, like a wave of the sea, inundating the enemy ranks with its noxious fumes. Failing in these attempts, Zolmani ordered a direct attack upon the Flotilla of Light. All at once, the innumerable squadrons of his Super-fleet swooped toward our lines in a concerted effort to break our front, but in this also he did not succeed. At this juncture, the voice of Gor-Gor rang out: "Fire!" and out from our machines there flew infinitesimal bullets by thousands upon thousands. These bullets poised themselves directly above the Super-fleet of the enemy and then exploded with a most gentle sound, sending down upon the air-craft myriads of colorful, fantastic radio-active rays, which cut them into pieces, twisting, bending, gnarling their steel framework, and hurling their flaming fragments headlong to the Earth. O the shrieks of the poor Devils as they tumbled to their certain death! They are still in my ears! And what a lurid conflagration in mid-heaven! All the horizons were made luminous, casting their awful shadows upon the stars! A necessary but awful destruction of the worlds of Evil, Anger, Hatred, Intolerance and blind Prejudice!

The only airship which escaped this universal cataclysm was that of Zolmani who, anticipating the general debacle as he gave the order of attack, had retreated behind the lines and flown back to Earth.

"Zolmani has again escaped us!" I cried excitedly to Gor-Gor, who appeared as calm as if not even a match had been lighted.

"So I see, so I see! He is a very clever Devil!" And he said no more.

During our aerial warfare, I had not been conscious of the fact that we were flying over the Kingdom of Zamestan, but now that the atmosphere was cleared of fire and smoke, I looked down and was shocked at the flooded condition of the country. Around the hill of Tazeh-shahr, the entire army of Doshman-Shab was struggling in the waters. It seemed that under the concussion of the radio-active rays, the carpet of steam which had been supporting the legions of Darkness had collapsed, precipitating its living burden into the flood beneath. When Gor-Gor saw this appalling sight, he issued orders to several regiments to go immediately to the rescue of the survivors. In this manner, innumerable souls were taken out of the jaws of the devouring flood and brought up safe and sound into our airships. They were ministered unto as if they were our own and treated as the Angels on high. Later, when the era of reconstruction began, these very sinners became saints, patriotic citizens of the New City, and champions of the New Civilization.

At the moment of victory, Gor-Gor had turned to me and said:

"The hour for the performance of your especial duty has

come. Take charge of a squadron of airships, and with your Vagabonds, hurry to the rescue of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and the Letters of the Living. When you stand in the presence of the Master, give Him my humble greetings. Go now, and may God bless you!"

We were well acquainted with the location of all the jails, having visited them on those occasions when we were carrying food to the prisoners. I assigned a plane to each Vagabond, telling them to rush to the relief of the Eighteen Letters of the Living and to bring them to the prison of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, where we should all meet.

The flooded streets of the Capital were already deserted, and we were forced to jump from our planes and swim to the various prisons. Only one guard remained in the building where our Beloved Teacher was incarcerated, and him I knew well. He told me with great alarm that Doshman-shab had just returned from Tazeh-shahr and had entered the room of the Great Captive. I was not a minute too soon! I flew down the corridor to the cell. I pushed the door, and as it opened, I entered into an atmosphere which chilled my blood and raised the hair upon my head. Doshman-shab was standing in the center of the room, rigid, dark, unrecognizable, holding a murderous weapon in a nerveless hand, while living emanations of evil escaped from his body, permeating and distorting the air. It seemed as though the qualities once enclosed in his malevolent form had broken their confines, leaving the vehicle behind them shattered.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher lay sleeping on His couch, and the Power of the Ages supported Him and the Peace of the Ages was about Him.

When Doshman-shab saw me, he began to shriek like

a man in a night-mare, and the sword fell from his hand with a loud, metallic sound.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher awoke and looked at us with full comprehension. I fell at His feet, weeping.

"Welcome back, Vagabond!"

"So, you are a Devil, you are an interpreter, you are a cook, you are an entertainer!" Doshman-shab raged feebly. "What a fool I was not to listen to Zolmani!"

Then he turned to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. "And you thought that the prophecy of the River of Namordany was true and you thought that an Angel bathing in its waters would be able to fly! Fool, fool that I was!"

When he had finished his whimperings, he grew moody and silent.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher looked at him compassionately, then He turned to me, asking:

"And the Armies of the Stars, are they safe?"

"They are awaiting the sight of their Lord."

"And my beloved Gor-Gor, how is he?"

"He sends his humble greetings."

I told of our aerial victory and of the escape of Zolmani.

"How is Del Aram?"

"My Lord, I do not know. I came directly here."

"Then let us hurry before it is too late! O Zolmani! O Zolmani! Let us hasten!"

"I was about to bind the hands of Doshman-shab, but the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher intervened. "It is not necessary. He is harmless." And the Prince of Darkness followed us without protest or complaint.

As we took our places in the airship, the lonely guard ran out and kissed the hands of the Great Prisoner.

"You have been kind to me," the Spirit of the Worlds'

Teacher said, "and I shall not forget you. Wait here, and if our friends inquire about us, say that we have gone to the rescue of Del Aram."

Del Aram was incarcerated in an ancient castle, whose forbidding turrets rose mightily toward the heavens. As we approached it, we saw that the valley in which it was situated was also flooded and already half of the building was submerged. I ordered that the airship be piloted alongside the great tower, and as we passed within a few yards of it, I leaped into the prison-room through the window, the bars of which had already been battered in by a previous interloper. Landing on my feet I saw the Darling of the Skies in the terrific grasp of Zolmani. She was near the point of exhaustion, but as yet holding her own, like a quivering sapling before the might of a storm.

"Zolmani! Be on your guard!" He turned, the Demon of demons, the Outlaw of the Stars! This was probably my first and last day of real war—war to the finish! The very worst of me was in play. Like two beasts of the jungle, we fought, we snarled, we tore each other's clothes and flesh. Neither of us was human, but each the incarnation of hate, of demoniacal rage and fury. We were not fighting—it was murder—murder—murder!

While we were thus brutalizing ourselves in the grip of this mutual death-struggle, the Vagabonds, after rescuing all the other Letters of the Living, had reported at the prison of the Spirit of the World's Teacher and been informed of our whereabouts by the faithful guard. I was by this time pinned against the wall, and Zolmani's heavy weight upon my breast was almost breaking the bones in my body. Suddenly, I heard the crashing sound of something landing in the room, and again—again—and again! The Vagabonds,

the beloved Vagabonds, had arrived, and all together they fell on Zolmani.

For a time he withstood them, defending himself blindly, furiously, outrageously, heroically. But soon sheer numbers overpowered him and crushed him to the floor, a mass of helpless, breathing flesh.

"That Devil had the energy of a whole regiment!"

"He is not a Devil. He is a bull, an elephant!"

"A regiment of bulls and elephants!"

"Anyhow, the Vagabond himself is no mean elephant!"

I opened my eyes. Above me Del Aram was bending anxiously. I too had fallen to the floor unconscious, but now I was looking into her face, and she smiled.

The Vagabonds hoisted the limp and disfigured body of Zolmani into the plane and then followed with Del Aram and me in their arms.

A detachment of airships was awaiting us, bearing the Letters of the First Word of Unity. Here we were—the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, Del Aram, the First Letters of the Living, the Vagabonds, myself—we were free! We were safe! And then, here was Zolmani, the foe of the Democracies of the Stars—the Devil of the Heavens, and Doshman-shab, the enemy of the people of our own little world—the Devil of the Earth—the two most powerful Devils of the Universe captured! I had had a hand in their capture! Let no one forget that I had had a hand in their capture!

Or you might think that we, the Vagabonds, might have done better. No! Never! We could not nor can we ever do better! We had reached the climax of our career, and we never could rise higher—at least I do not think so. We may keep on living and performing—not miracles like these

—still some kind of miracles—but I really and honestly think that with the rescue of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and His beloved disciples, and with the capture of the two Arch-enemies of the Stars, we had attained the highest pinnacle of our glory and achievement.

And now we are soaring through the air toward Tazeh-shahr, the New City, the City of Peace, the City of Love, the City of Freedom and safety, the City where we shall build a House of Prayer for all the nations, the Future City of God and Man!

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THE GREAT TRIAL

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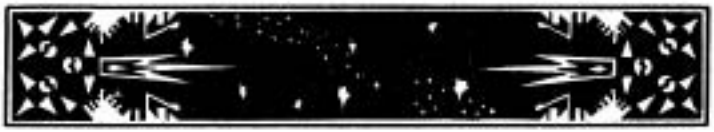

Chapter XXVII

THE GREAT TRIAL

AS our silver air-steed approached Tazeh-shahr, the New City on the hill, I could see dense masses of people gazing skyward expectantly. Slowly we circled down, and landed in an open field.

When the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher stepped upon the ground, Gor-Gor, Faravan-taher, Afsar-shad, Sar-sar and a group of the gallant Soldiers of Light advanced to meet Him with hushed voices and overflowing hearts, while the flotillas of the armies of the Universe hung above, welcoming Him in silence.

The first act of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was to think of the guard who had been the companion of his solitude, and He despatched an airship to the Capital of Zamestan with orders to bring him at once to Tazeh-shahr.

He was then escorted to a tent which had been brought by Faravan-taher as a gift from the City of the Heavens. This tent was woven of finest silk and scintillated with the colors of the rainbow. Its interior was studded with priceless jewels and dazzled and danced in the irridescent fire of ruby, emerald and opal.

When the guard was brought into the presence of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, he fell at His feet.

"My Lord! To you who have given me life, I come as a suppliant!"

"Express your desire, my comrade of lonely days and it shall be realized."

"I ask not for myself, Lord, but for the population of Tar-ankabout. The city is flooded, the torrent rages through the streets and the waters rise higher and higher. Unless you extend your hand in mercy, all will perish. I beg you to save these, my people, and to forgive their mistakes. I know that they have been cruel to your soldiers, and remember well that when you passed through the streets, they laughed and threw hot ashes upon your head. They had no conscience, that I know, but they lived in constant fear of Doshman-shab and had no opportunities for development. Lord, they would be happy with you, and they could learn, I know that they could learn."

"Arise, friend! Your wish is fulfilled!" The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher turned to Gor-Gor and commanded the rescue of every breathing creature, man, woman, child and animal, in the city of Tar-ankabout. It was done—and lo, one pure soul became the salvation of millions!

Then a law of general amnesty was proclaimed by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, forgiving those who had taken up arms against the Soldiers of Light, inviting all to come forth from their hiding places, to lay down their weapons and to co-operate with Him in an era of unprecedented reconstruction, so that together they might foster the spirit of a new civilization, lay the foundation of a new administration of justice, open the door of a new dispensation of truth, and prepare the consciousness of mankind for

the writing of a New History, the Ideals of which would be:

The unfurling of the Flag of Universal Peace.

The promotion of the principles of the Oneness of the world of humanity.

The expansion of the teachings of international Conciliation.

The diffusion of the Ideals of Love, Mercy, Justice, Right and Liberty.

The gathering together of the Children of the New Race.

The declaration of the Evangel of Happiness and Joy.

The establishment of the Kingdom of Truth, Beauty and Light in the hearts of men.

The fervent hope of this new Society would be to usher in the Dawn of the New Age.

To Promulgate the constructive principles of Universal Civilization.

To lay the unshakable foundation of the palace of human Brotherhood.

To assist in practical and spiritual methods every cause that cherishes the golden dream of the Millenium.

To help by all means possible the evolution of the powers of the mind and the unfolding of the realities of spirit.

To assert the deathless, radiant, spiritual station of man and proclaim the luminous Origin and Goal of the soul.

To pay reverend homage to all the Prophets, Saviours and Sages of the Stars and of the Earth.

To declare the God of Absolute Good, the God of Absolute Beauty, the God of Absolute Perfection.

To keep the path open for unending, upward progress,

from world to world, from Star to Star, from constellation to constellation, forever and without end.

To teach the message of love and service—love for all mankind and service to be rendered to every living creature.

To exhort all the awakened and forward-looking men and women to arise and band together, irrespective of race, color, religion and creed and banish from the face of the Earth the spectres of War, Poverty, Sickness, Prejudice, Ignorance, Falsehood, and to replace them with the benevolent and beatific spirits of Peace, Prosperity, Health, Appreciation, Wisdom, Truth.

Realizing the sacredness and nobility of this divinely-appointed task, the Armies of the Stars and the inhabitants of the Earth should consecrate without reservation their lives, their abilities, their utter devotion and their manifold resources to the establishment of the above Ideals in all parts of the World.

The sole aim of the Army of Light and the inhabitants of the Earth shall be to bring down the Kingdom of Heaven, so that they may not have to say, "Lo, here!" nor "Lo, there!" but that they may say, "Now is the accepted time, the Kingdom of God is among us!" The Army of Light should impress upon all minds a strong conviction that the Kingdom of Heaven should be established here below, not by force but by Love, not with matter but with spirit.

Humanity must give up thinking of religion as a means of escaping a future Hell, and of arriving at a future Heaven. The Army of Light must show now, more than ever, that by the union of loving and truthful hearts, God comes *here*, immortality begins *here*, and Heaven lies *about us*.

To fight the good fight of justice and truth—this still will

be the work of Angels and of men, and to unify those who wish to fight for Good against Evil—this still will be the True Religion of the Soldiers of Light!

When our Beloved Leader received Sar-sar, He heard a full but modest account of his spiritual triumph on Mars. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was deeply moved at learning that through the power of the World's Holy Spirit, Sar-sar, singly and alone, had been confirmed to unfurl the flag of Universal Peace on his planet, and He looked at him with great tenderness and said:

"My son! You have already rendered a mighty service to your Lord, and I am satisfied. Rest assured of the continued confirmations of your Father, and when you return to your people with the song of everlasting joy upon your lips, stand among them and deliver this, my heartfelt message of Love:

" 'O sons and daughters of God upon the planet Mars! Know this truth: Throughout all ages one WORD has sounded in the hearts of the humanities of the Stars. It is by the light of this WORD that the night of your globe has been kindled with the rays of Peace and goodwill. My hope for Mars is that the tongues of its enlightened ones, as well as the minds of its scientists and the souls of its artists, may become altars for the interpretation of this WORD. Each time that the WORD incarnates itself in a human temple, on any Star, it dates a New History. Know that through the manifestation of the Word, the civilizations of the Stars have gained their momentum, and that man's fairest laws are but the faint echoes of its eternal chime. The WORD calls, and lo, justice unveils her face! The WORD speaks, and lo, truth steps from the shadow!

The WORD is the beginning of a New Creation, the Paradise of New Flowers, the Sea of Refreshing Hopes and the spring of Inexhaustible Youth. May you become partakers in the forming of this New Creation! May you linger and sing in this Paradise of New Flowers! May you swim in this Sea of Refreshing Hopes! May you drink from this spring of Inexhaustible Youth'!"

When the waters of the River of Na-mordany had receded, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher called in a corps of engineers from Mars to supervise the drainage of the flooded and marshy areas, to build bridges and roads, and to reconstruct from bottom to top the material and economic life of the Earth. This co-ordination and co-operation of the geniuses of two globes worked magically, and within a comparatively short space of time, the affairs of our globe were rehabilitated, and running with an order and exactitude unimagined by its most progressive inhabitants.

The effect of the descent of the Armies of the Angels upon the minds of the people is beyond the power of my pen to describe. They had so long been held down by Doshman-shab and his brutish courtiers that they had lost faith in the supernatural. Most of them had become materialists, with no thought of the future life and its beatitudes. As atheists and agnostics, their minds were dark, their hearts gloomy, their faces dull and overcast. Now all was changed! Faith had been restored, belief in God had been regained. Their joy in their Deliverer was unbounded, and their eyes shone with understanding and joy. Daily association with the Children of Light brought infinite measures of happiness. They worked contentedly because there were no cruel

whips to goad them on nor grasping hands to take possession of the entire fruit of their labors. The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher appointed a commission composed of Jameh Zar, Doust Parast, Hakim Hakimian, Darbar-adli and myself to draft a new code of laws, which were in due time promulgated, and the people of the Earth willingly submitted themselves to these Laws of the Heavens, for they perceived in their application freedom, prosperity and success.

In due time, the little Camp-city where the refugees had fathered under the protection of the Army of Light, became a mighty metropolis, teeming with a busy population. Pasand-bana had from the first days made a plan providing for its architectural and artistic expansion. The encircling hills were dotted with villas, gardens and farms. All the branches of industry worked harmoniously for the advancement of the people's cause. The bankers, the statesmen, the managers of great corporations, the writers, the artists and the thousand and one small traders and craftsmen cooperated for the benefit of the whole community. The fame of Tazeh-shahr and the intellectual, industrial, economic and spiritual influence of its citizens extended far and wide, and all mankind followed its example, learning from it the lessons of the new Civilization.

And so the little Camp-city became the Spiritual Capital of a glorious race, a race of unlimited capacity, a race which allowed nothing to obstruct its vision nor to limit its freedom as it forged ahead with steady steps toward the goal destined for it by the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher.

Pasand-bana, Tasveer-kash and Jahan-nama had designed an Inter-Stellar Shrine in honor of the starry visitors who in the First Campaign had sacrificed their lives for the free-

dom of the Earth. From one of the lofty hills overlooking Tazeh-shahr it lifts its white marble arms to the sky, while it holds in its breast the memory of the Soldiers of the Stars. Here the slopes of the hill are spread with shady lawns and paradises of flowers. Here the children play and the birds never forget to sing. Toward this temple of memory the inhabitants of other planets gaze wistfully, and sometimes across the spaces they come—to offer up their thanksgiving and their tears.

Near Tazeh-shahr, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher laid the foundation of His Universal University. To this monumental work the Letters of Unity brought their intelligence and their creative energies, and as the various buildings were from time to time completed, they were dedicated with joy-creating ceremonies.

From the time of our victory over the Forces of Darkness, the greatest problem confronting us had been—What should be done with Zolmani and Doshman-shah? Here were the two Arch-Enemies of the Heavens and of the Earth, and they were our prisoners. What form of punishment should be meted out to them? The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher left the matter in the hands of the Armies of the Stars.

In order to learn the consensus of opinion, a Universal Tribunal was organized under the Presidency of Gor-Gor, the members of which were composed of the First Letters of Unity and included a representative number of generals from the armies of the different globes. Many protracted sessions were held, but we could arrive at no decision.

For quite a while I myself had been formulating a certain kind of punishment, but when I presented my scheme

to the tribunal with all the logic that my reasonable mind could produce, Del Aram jumped from her seat and opposed me vigorously:

"The plan of the Vagabond to hang Zolmani and Doshman-shab on a gibbet betwixt the Heavens and the Earth, as a standing deterrant to other Devils, is too horrible to even contemplate! If I did not know the Vagabond better than he knows himself, I would state that this fiendish plan was the emanation of a dark and unregenerate mind. This august Tribunal knows full well that I have suffered no less than others from the cruelty of these enemies of Angels and men, nevertheless I could never cast my vote in favor of such a gruesome and awful spectacle, daily presented before the eyes of the humanities of the Stars.

"If I have understood aright the lessons of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, His aim in all instances has been to forget and to forgive those who have done evil against us. His desire has been to erase from the tablets of the minds and hearts all ancestral vestiges of desire for revenge, and here comes the Vagabond, trying to persuade us to keep alive this blood-feud between the Heavens and the Earth throughout all eternity! Has he not yet learned how to forget injuries and how to forgive them?"

"We shall never forget and we shall never forgive!" cried an infuriated, member of the Tribunal.

"I advocate burning them alive!" shouted another.

"I wish to torture them slowly to death!" shrieked a general, I do not know from what Star.

"Let them be dismembered by wild horses!"

"Place them within empty pillars and slowly pour in mortar until they are petrified!"

"Blow them from the muzzles of their own cannon!"

"Throw them under the feet of their own elephants!"

"Let their heads be cut off!"

"Let their eyes be put out!"

"Let them be boiled in cauldrons of oil!"

And so it went on, day after day, night after night. It appeared that we were all unregenerate Angels when it came to the punishing of these now helpless Devils. I could not blame the generals of the Stars, for they had taken a solemn oath to punish Zolmani as the Devil of the Sky, and in regard to his accomplice, I could not go against my own world, for all its inhabitants insisted upon the death of Doshman-shab as the Devil of the Earth.

Doshman-shab had not a single friend left. Now that he was in jail, all mankind was against him. Therefore, mere scourging, horsewhipping, flogging or hanging were both undramatic and anti-climactic! One of the generals proposed an entirely new form of punishment, invented by himself. He brought the instrument before the Tribunal and demonstrated it. It was so ghastly a procedure that, in fairness to ourselves, I must say that we were all shocked, and I will not attempt to detail it. I had never realized before that Angels could act in such a satanic manner, which only goes to prove that—give an Angel a chance and he will out-devil the Devil himself!

The upshot of it all was this: We could not agree among ourselves and our stock of patience was fast becoming exhausted. At last, in an all-night debate, Jameh-Zar suggested the idea of submitting the problem to the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher. Knowing His qualities of mercy, we were all afraid of the result, and many voices of protest were raised on all sides. What if He would let them loose! What if He would forgive them! This was too much

for us to contemplate. We loved our Master, but at the same time we wished to follow our own inclinations. Jameh Zar, however, continued to argue, to persuade, to plead, and finally demanded a vote on the motion. It was a most nerve-racking hour. The result was that his suggestion was adopted by a majority.

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was informed of our decision. It was long after midnight, but He came to us immediately, and standing on the platform, addressed us without formality:

"My comrades of the Stars! All of us have suffered from the hands of Zolmani and Doshman-shab. They have done harm and they would have done more had they been able. They are Princes of Evil and incarnations of wickedness. Of this let no one entertain the least doubt. But at the same time, there is in man and in demon a seed for *improvement* and there is in God the power to bring about that improvement. You have been taught that God is the All-Merciful One and that the quality of His mercy is unrestrained. If the sinner, no matter how sinful, turn his heart to God, begging His pardon, do you think that He will be refused? And will you refuse—you who are the Angels of His Kingdom and the Soldiers of His Army?

"Let me relate to you a story—

"In the days of the Christ, there was a man of dissolute nature, who had consumed his all and reached the utmost bounds of folly and error. He was bold, cruel and of a blackened name. Even Zolmani and Doshman-shab would have become ashamed before the impurity of this man. He had spent his days to no profit and never did he try to soothe the heart of any creature. His brain was void of understanding and filled with arrogance, and his body was

fat with forbidden morsels. The skirt of his garment was stained with iniquity, and he was begrimed like a smoky dwelling with shamelessness. His feet were not rightly directed as are yours, who are among the clear-sighted and the far-visioned ones, nor were his ears disposed to listen to good counsel. Men held him in abomination like the year of famine, pointing to him from afar. A scorching wind had burned up the harvest of his virtues and he had not garnered a single wholesome grain of truth. He had run the black-book so completely through and through that there no longer remained a page whereon to write. Sinful and wilful and devoted to his pleasures, night and day he passed carelessly in drunkenness and revelry.

"I have heard that one day the Christ, returning from the desert, was passing by the temple of a Saint, and the Saint came down from his chapel and fell before Him, with his head on the ground. The Sinner from a distance caught sight of them and approached, dazzled by their presences like the moth before the candle, gazing at them earnestly, sighing and hesitant, like a poor man before a wealthy merchant. Silent and motionless, he stood, burning pleas hovering on his lips for nights spent till daylight in careless negligence, and raining tears of sorrow from his eyes as from a cloud, that life had been spent, alas, in so much heedlessness!

" 'I have thrown away the ready money of my precious life and have brought to my account no act of goodness. Let no living man be ever like me, for him would death be better far than life! He has escaped well who died in infancy and has not as an old man to bear the burden of shame! Forgive, O Creator of the World, my offences, for if they rise with me, they will be but sad companions!'

"In such tones lamenting, stood the ancient Sinner, imploring help from Him who is the Helper, hanging down his head for very shame, a river of tears flowing upon his bosom.

"Meanwhile the Saint, half turning away, his brain puffed up with vain self-esteem, fixed a sour brow on the Sinner and exclaimed:

" 'Why does this ruined fellow dog our steps—ignorant and ill-omened, why does he claim kindred with us? Encompassed with fire up to the very neck, his life given over to the storm of the passions, what good can come from his polluted breath? What right has such as he to seek the society of the Messiah and me? What is he that he should press his companionship on us? Rather let him follow his own deeds to Hell! I am pained at the very aspect of his ugly countenance. May it never be that I shall fall into his fire! On the Last Day, when all men are assembled for judgment, let not my resurrection, O God, be with his!'

"At this moment, an inspired voice from the august Lord of all Perfection and Mercy came to the Christ:

" 'Though this be a wise man and that be a fool, the invocation of each will be accepted by me. The one who turned his bright day to corruption has lamented it with burning tears. Whosoever comes to seek Me in his helplessness, him will I in no wise drive away from the threshold of My Mercy. His evil works will I remove from him, and for what he has done I will bring him to Paradise. And if he who has been the Saint of Holiness scorns to sit beside him in eternity, say to him, 'Fear not that he should disgrace thee in the resurrection; for this one shall they bear to Paradise and that one shall be deprived.'

"Therefore, in the Court of Heaven meekness is esteemed above self-exaltation. If your garment be clean and your actions foul, you need no key to the door of Hell.

"Better is the Sinner who has thoughts of God than the Saint who has only the shadow of sancity!"

Fully comprehending the point of the story, we, the members of the Universal Tribunal, could not raise our eyes to our Beloved Teacher. We could not even look into one another's faces. We were humiliated and thoroughly uncomfortable. Our hearts were agitated, and the silent Spirit was searching in the depths of our souls for the essential motive back of our attitude. Was it hate? Was it revenge? What was it? I would rather have met again our redoubtable antagonists than have gone through those disturbing and heart-rifling moments when our Lord was looking straight into our consciousnesses, and while not accusing us, was spreading before us a true picture of our naked selves.

After a few moments of silence, when no one had anything to say, the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher continued:

"I know that Zolmani and Doshman-shab have committed great crimes—crimes which are wholly and justifiably unpardonable in the Court of the humanities of the Stars, but not unpardonable in the Court of the Almighty! Therefore I suggest that the members of this Tribunal give a chance to these two Arch-Devils to become Arch-Angels. Let them be baptized in the River of Na-mordany; give them the greatest opportunity of their lives and show to all the humanities of the globes hanging in yon blue firmament that you—the members of this Tribunal—are as perfect and as merciful as your Father in Heaven is perfect and merciful!"

There was a great commotion, uneasy consciences stirred and furtive glances were exchanged.

"There is a mysterious power in a name. Names are formed of letters and each letter has a peculiar and distinct vibration. When the letters of a New Name are attuned to one another, spiritual vibrations are set in motion, which will help in the creation of a new heart, the realization of a new character and the beginning of a new day. It has been written of old that 'he that hath ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith! To Him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a New Name written.' And again it has been reported of old that of 'him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go out no more; and I write upon him the Name of my God, and the Name of the City of my God, which cometh down from Heaven from my God, and I will write upon him my New Name.'

"Let us now send for Zolmani and Doshman-shab. Let the guards conduct them before this august tribunal and let us, in the spirit of our Heavenly Father, free them from their chains, absolve them of their crimes, crown them with the diadems of our forgiveness and write upon them the New Names, the letters of which are so impregnated with the Spiritual Powers of the Universe that their hearts will be changed, their characters revolutionized and their lives dedicated to truth and light."

"And these New Names?" Jameh Zar was the only one who dared to ask the question.

"I suggest that we may christen Zolmani with the New Name, *Nourani* and Doshman-shab with the New Name, *Ashti-rouz.*"

There was a protracted silence, the silence that precedes a storm.

"Does the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher mean that we should forgive these Enemies of the Stars and set them loose on the unsuspecting and unprepared children of men?" asked one.

"The New Names will change their natures," the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher answered.

"I hardly believe it."

"It remains to be seen," said another.

"And supposing we give them their freedom, who will guarantee their future behaviour?" demanded another.

"Your own consciences should guarantee their actions. If you sincerely loved them—"

"Sincerely love the Arch-Fiends of the Heavens and of the Earth?" exclaimed a horrified Angel.

"And what if you did?" our Beloved Teacher challenged the objector.

"But this is impossible! These are not ordinary criminals."

"We must protect humanity from their perfidity!"

"The most impregnable fort in which humanity is protected is the Love of God."

"But we are responsible to our fellowmen! What if these freed Wicked Ones again set the Universe on fire? Have they not committed enough crimes?"

"You must trust in the converting and transforming power of the World's Holy Spirit," our Master answered patiently.

"I believe that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher is right!" Sar-sar was the first to take a definite stand. "I am willing to abide by the decision of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher."

This attitude on the part of Sar-sar encouraged Doust Parast to offer the following resolution:

"Resolved that this Universal Tribunal of the Humanities of the Stars adopt the suggestion of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, to wit: To forgive our Arch-Enemies, Zolmani and Doshman-shab and to bestow upon them the New Names of Nourani and Ashti-rouz. I move the adoptition of the above Resolution.

"I second the motion." Hakim Hakimian was on his feet.

Confused and indistinct voices were raised from all parts of the court.

"It is moved and seconded—" God-Gor was trying to make himself heard, but loud murmurs of dissatisfaction drowned him.

"Those who are in favor of adopting the resolution of Doust Parast may signify their willingness by rising," Gor-Gor was repeating over and over again. Nobody heeded his call.

Many felt that they had not been given enough time to discuss the subject. They accused Gor-Gor of hurrying them to a decision.

On the other hand, the sympathizers of the motion were crying aloud: "Question! Question!"

Gor-Gor lost his patience and roared:

"Men and women of the Stars! You have discussed this matter for weeks and have not agreed among yourselves. The time has arrived for a decision! You have all heard the motion. Those who are in favor of it may stand up!"

In a moment the court became quiet and sat watching to see if anyone would respond.

Del Aram arose and stood as a sentinal.

What! She of all people—she who had suffered so much at the hands of Zolmani! Wonder! Surprise!

Standing there, she turned and looked at me and I was up!

Next Jameh Zar arose. Then Doust Parast, and one by one all the Letters of the First Word of Unity.

After all, we were the real sufferers and we were willing to forget and to forgive.

But nobody else would rise. Great Heavens! We were by far in the minority. The motion was going to be lost! There was nothing else to do, and the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher arose to leave the meeting. But we did not sit down.

Then, as the others saw Him leave the Council Chamber, carrying on His bowed shoulders the burden of our ignorance, something happened, some power entered their hearts, some light illumined their eyes, and they all arose as though impelled by the World's Holy Spirit and stood, speechless.

There was no demonstration.

It was our greatest triumph, greater by far than victory over the outside enemies.

It was a triumph over the enemies within!

A mighty conquest indeed! Mightier than any ever recorded by man!

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher felt the power in the court and returned, taking his seat on the platform. Then He motioned to us to sit down.

Immediately, Gor-Gor appointed a committee, in which I was included, to deliver the decision of the Tribunal to Zolmani and Doshman-shab and to bring them back with us.

As we left the court, it was about an hour before the dawn.

We hastened to the prison and aroused one of the guards, who led us to the cell. He opened the door, and when we entered, we found Zolmani and Doshman-shab lying prostrate on the floor. Their clothes were torn to shreds, their bodies bruised and cut and their faces disfigured with marks of teeth. They were almost beyond recognition. I felt their pulses! Great God! They were dead! What had happened here? I summoned all the guards and they ran in with pallid faces. They looked at the dead bodies and shivered. Then one of them came forward and said:

"Since they were brought here, it has been one unceasing quarrel, each accusing the other with the loss of his power and dominion. On several occasions we had to separate them, but generally after these fights they would become great friends and talk and laugh together. In fact, their quarrels and reconciliations became so frequent that we did not pay any more attention to them. Last night, we heard the usual noise and thought nothing of it, and here, they must have been fighting and biting and tearing each other to death!"

We laid both bodies on a cot and carried it into the courtroom. The members of the Tribunal realized that something terrific had happened. We took the cot to the platform and placed it before the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and we raised the edge of the cover, revealing the faces of the dead men. I made this announcement:

"Friends! You do not need to fear any longer. Our enemies are beyond the reach of our reward or punishment. Here is all that is left of them."

The heads were bowed down.

Then the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher arose and Himself acted as one of the pall-bearers, and we carried the two bodies on our shoulders to the summit of a nearby hill. Here, as the sun mounted from the East, gilding the horizons of the Earth, and as the cool breezes played through the leaves of the trees, and as the birds awoke to chant their matins—in the presence of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher and before the silent representatives of the humanities of the Stars, they were interred together, side by side, beneath the sod.

A few days later, a stone was placed over their grave, bearing the inscription by which they shall be known to all future generations—

HERE LIE

THE BODIES OF TWO SPIRITS

OF

THE HEAVENS

AND OF

THE EARTH

NOURANI

AND

ASHTI-ROUZ

THE MESSAGE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLDS' TEACHER

കേരള സാഹിത്യ
അക്കാദമി

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE MESSAGE OF THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLDS' TEACHER

THE Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was wise and His wisdom was beyond measure. On every occasion He taught us that education was the secret of progress; that education was Light, and that what he world needed was more Light. Therefore, in order to spread the rays of the sun of education to all parts of the Earth, on a certain day, He gathered together His disciples, the Eighteen Letters of Unity, on the top of one of the hills surrounding Tazeh-shahr, and delivered to them His Sermon of Wisdom. From then on, the hill became known as the Hill of Wisdom, and through that divine Sermon, He baptized us with His spirit and sent us to all parts of the world to diffuse the Gospel of Education.

On that day, He was full of the glowing joy of Service, and told us that it was His wish that we should visit every country on the five continents as well as the islands of the seas. With His blessed fingers, He pointed in the direction of Asia, with the teeming populations of China, Japan, India, Persia, Turkey, Afghanestan, Mesopotamia; then the New Africa, with all its vast possibilities; then progressive Europe, with its nations of England, France, Germany, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Switzerland and its newly-formed

political communities; then the Americas, with the democratic United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America and South America; then the thousands of islands in the Pacific Ocean, and finally Australia and New Zealand.

He conferred upon us the title of the "Order of the Great Companions," and assured us that as we travelled around the world, we would meet many souls, men and women, who would recognize us by our symbol—the Sword of Light, for the peculiarity of the Sword of Light was that it remained hidden from all eyes except those who had attained to cosmic consciousness.

We would encounter some glorious beings who had already communicated with the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher during His imprisonment. These were of the Illuminati and belonged to the Order of the Great Companions. They were to be found in many parts of the Earth, engaged in the promotion of peace and good-will among their fellowmen. Others also we would find who, unaware of the fact that the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was now living on this globe, were ardently praying for His coming.

After these instructions, He delivered to us

HIS SERMON OF WISDOM.

"O Members of the Order of the Great Companions! Drink ye from the fountain of Wisdom; walk ye in the rose-garden of Wisdom; soar ye in the atmposphere of Wisdom, and talk ye in the language of Wisdom. Be ye the signs of Wisdom to the inhabitants of the world and the fragrance of the Merciful among mankind.

"Arise in the name of your Lord in the assembly of beings, and take the cup of life with the hand of assurance. Drink ye therefrom first, then give to drink to those who advance from among the people of different religions.

"Triumph over the East and the West by the sword of your utterance. It is not yours to conquer by the power of iron and steel.

"It behooves you to-day, who have drunk the elixir of life from the hand of your Lord, to pulsate like an artery in the body of the Universe—thus the world may be moved through you and every mouldering bone be clothed in flesh.

"O ye my Letters of Unity! Proclaim to mankind: In this Day the door of Heaven is opened by the key of the Godly Name, the Ocean of Generosity is manifested and is rolling before your faces, and the Sun of Providence is shining and gleaming.

"Gird ye up the loins of endeavor and do your best in training the people of the world. Do not imagine that the Cause of God is a cause of opposition, hatred and wrath. O people of the Earth! Make not the religion of God a source of variance among you. Verily, of a truth, it was revealed for the purpose of unifying the whole world.

"Ye are the dawning-places of Love and the day-springs of the Favor of God! Show forth that which ye possess of truth; if it be accepted, the object is attained, if not, never insist. Fulfill your promise. In all matters be just and equitable.

"Be a lamp in darkness; a comforter in trouble; a sea to the thirsty; a refuge to the afflicted; a helper to the oppressed. Be a home to the stranger; a healing to the sick; a sight to the blind, and a path to him who goes astray.

"Be the beauty of the face of truth, an adornment to the temple of fidelity, a throne to the house of character, a spirit to the body of the world, a banner to the hosts of justice and a light to the horizon of goodness. Be a dew to the fertile and rich ground, an ark to the sea of

science, a star in the heaven of generosity, a diadem to the head of wisdom. In truth, be firm and unwavering, be quick in doing good deeds; be a veiler of people's faults; be a runner after truth, and a forgiver of transgressors.

"O ye Order of the Great Companions! When people ask about your aims, tell them: We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of nations. That all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers; that the bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men should be strengthened; that diversity of religions should cease and differences of race be annulled. And so it shall be! These fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the Most Great Peace shall come, and all men be as one kindred and one family. Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind.

"Make firm the girdle of endeavor, that perchance religious strife and conflict may be removed from among the people of the world. For love of God and of His servants, engage in this great and mighty matter. Religious hatred and rancour is a world-consuming fire, and the quenching thereof most arduous, unless the hand of Divine Might give men deliverance from this unfruitful calamity.

"Give assurance to the people that this darkness shall be dispelled, these impenetrable clouds scattered, and that the Sun of Reality shall appear in full splendor, melting the icebergs of hatred which have transformed the moving seas of humanity into a hard and frozen immensity. Then the vices of the world of nature shall be changed into praiseworthy attributes and the lights of the excellences of the Divine Realm shall appear.

"The principles of Universal Civilization shall penetrate

the dead body of the world and the Love of God, like unto an artery, shall beat through the hearts of the five continents. The East will become illumined, the West perfumed, and the children of men shall enter beneath the all-embracing canopy of the Oneness of the World of Humanity.

"Know this of a truth: This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of the unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and the fundamental oneness of religions.

"O ye my companions! Go to all parts of the world and teach the people these Lessons of Wisdom. For this is not the time for rest and tranquility. This is not the season for silence and stillness. The nightingale of the rose-garden of uprightness must display its wonderful trills and melodies. The bird of guidance must exhibit its eloquent speech.

"The century has come when all the nations are to be unified. The century has come when all the races shall enjoy international peace. The century has come when all the governments of the Earth shall do away with their prejudices and enter into an everlasting pact of good-will. The century has come when all the countries of the world shall prove to be one family. Thus may mankind rest comfortably under the broad Tabernacle of the One God.

"O my Letters of Unity! Go forth and spread the gospel of the oneness of mankind; the independent investigation of truth; the identity of the Teachings of all the Prophets; the ideal that religion must ever be the cause of union;

that religion must be in accord with science and reason; that equality between men and women must be realized in every corner of the Earth; that religious, racial, patriotic, economic and national prejudices must be wiped away; that the banner of Universal Peace must be hoisted on the top of the Parliament Buildings of the world; that sociological and economic divergences and disputes must be adjusted; that one international auxiliary language must be established for world-wide communication, and that a Universal Tribunal be formed for the adjudication and settlement of international disagreements.

"In brief, the quintessence of truth is this: You must all become united and harmonized in order to illumine this gloomy world; to abolish the foundations of hostility from among mankind; to perfume the inhabitants of the Universe with the Holy Fragrances; to enlighten the people of the East and of the West with the Light of Guidance; to erect the Tent of the Love of God and suffer each and all to enter under its protection; to bestow comfort to every one under the shade of the Divine Tree; to astonish your enemies by the manifestation of the utmost love; to make the ravenous and blood-thirsty wolves to become the gazelles of the meadow of the Love of God; to administer the taste of non-resistance to the tyrant; to teach the long-suffering and resignation of the martyr to the murderer; to spread the traces of unity and to chant the praises and glorification of the Merciful Lord.

"You were made to be happy and not to be sad; for joy, not for sorrow. Happiness is life; sadness is death. Spiritual happiness is eternal life. It is a light that night does not extinguish; it is an honor that shame does not follow;

an existence which is not resolved into annihilation. For happiness, the worlds and the contingent beings were created.

"O my Soldiers of Light! Through the protection and assistance of God, you must conduct yourselves in such a manner that you may stand out among other souls, distinguished by a brilliancy like unto the sun.

"The Kingdom of peace, salvation and reconciliation is being founded in the Invisible, and it will by degrees become manifest and apparent through the power of the WORD. Therefore, it is for you to consider how you may educate men, that the darkness of ignorance and heedlessness may disappear and that the radiance of the Kingdom may encompass the world; that animosity and hatred may be dispersed, while the attracting power of the love of God so completely unite the hearts of men, that all hearts may beat as a single heart; that contention and war may utterly pass away, while peace and reconciliation lift their standard in the midst of the Earth and men become enamoured of one another; that the joys of spirituality may prevail over material pleasures; that East and West may delight in one another as lovers, and North and South embrace each other in closest affection; that the visible world may become the mirror of the world of the Kingdom; that the image of the Supreme Concourse may be reflected in all the gatherings of men, that the Earth may be changed into the Paradise of the Glorious Lord, and the Divine Jerusalem descend from Heaven and embrace the terrestrial globe.

"O ye lovers of Light! Be confident that the darkness of this gloomy night of war shall pass away and the sun of spiritual peace dawn from the horizons of the hearts. Have patience! Wait, but do not sit idle. Work while you are waiting. Smile when you are wearied with monotony. Be

firm while everything around you is being shaken. Be hopeful while the ugly face of despair grins at you. Speak aloud while the malevolent forces of Hell strive to crush your minds. Be valiant and courageous while men all around you are cringing with fear and cowardice. Do not yield to the overwhelming power of tyranny, despotism and war. Serve the cause of democracy, freedom and peace. Diffuse the fragrance of the rose of conciliation. Continue your journey to the end. The Bright Day is coming. The nucleus of the New Race is forming. The harbingers of the New Ideals of international brotherhood are appearing. The trees of hope will be clothed with verdant leaves. The copper of scorn and derision will be transmuted into the gold of honor and repute. The desert of ignorance will be changed into the luxuriant garden of knowledge. The threatening clouds shall be dispelled and the stars of peace and harmony will irradiate in the clear consciences of all the children of men.

"And the Golden Rule of the New Day is this: *If you look toward merey, regard not that which benefits yourselves, but hold to that which will benefit mankind. If you look toward justice, choose for others that which you choose for yourselves.*"

The Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher paused for a moment and looked into our faces. We were all listening with rapt attention, for we did not wish to lose one of His utterances. This was indeed a Sermon of Wisdom! It was no other than the spiritual manual of the future civilization of the Earth. These precepts were the seeds that we were commanded to sow in the hearts of our fellowmen. They were the capital of the spiritual trade in which we had to engage ourselves.

After a moment, He continued:

"When you meet the Order of the Great Companions, they shall recognize you by the Sword of Light. You will find them in the most unexpected manner and in out of the way places. They are walking in the path of Illumination and have completely yielded themselves to God-impulses. They have studied the Bibles of the Way-Showers of the Earth—the Classics of Cosmic Consciousness—studied them deeply until the Authors behind them have become their living companions, until they think and feel with Them and above all act with them. These are the true teachers in all countries. They are the real Guides. Associate and work with them for they are distinguished by certain unmistakable attributes. As the rose is recognized by its fragrance, so these Disciples of Truth are recognized by:

"A great sympathy and compassion for the sorrows of others.

"A deep tenderness for all forms of life.

"An unlimited, divine patience.

"An abiding joy and faith in the goodness of the Creator.

"A knowledge of peace that passeth all understanding.

"A life lived in the Eternal Now.

"God-consciousness and God-intoxication.

"They claim the citizenship of the Universe and they are the Children of the Sky.

"Their unchanging loyalty is to universal truth.

"They are the Way-showers and Way-farers in the Way of God.

"They know that all the precepts of the Great Companions of the past have centered on the Way.

"Their cry is: Pave the Way!

"Open the Way!

Song of the Caravan

"Prepare the Way—so that the King of Glory may walk therein!

"All the Ways are alike to the Members of the Order of the Great Companions—

"The Divine Way of Brahma,
"The Middle Way of Buddha,
"The Heaven Way of Confucius,
"The Simple Way of Lao-tzu,
"The Light Way of Zarathustra,
"The Righteous Way of Moses,
"The Straight Way of Christ,
"The Submissive Way of Mohammad.

"All these Ways are the Ways of God that lead men to ONE GOAL.

"And toward this Goal The Great Companions walk, their arms around each other's waists, their hand pointing to distant landscapes. It is not theirs to be disheartened, for they know that AFFECTION can solve the problems of life, and that those who love each other to the last shall become invincible. And as they tramp a perpetual journey, they sing ONE SONG—the ONE SONG OF THE CARAVAN—the song of comradeship along the open road of life."

When the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had finished His Sermon of Wisdom, He told us that as we journey from continent to continent, from city to city and from village to village, we must turn our hearts to our Maker and after this manner pray:

"O God! Refresh and gladden my spirit.
"Purify my heart.
"Illumine my powers.
"I lay all my affairs in Thy hand.

Message of Spirit of Worlds' Teacher

"Thou art my Guide and my Refuge.
"I will not be sorrowful and grieved any more.
"I will be a happy and joyful being.
"O God! I will not worry any more.
"I will not let trouble harass me any longer.
"I will not dwell on the unpleasant things of life.
"O God! Thou art kinder to me than myself.
"I dedicate myself to Thee, O God!"

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MY MORNING AND EVENING STAR

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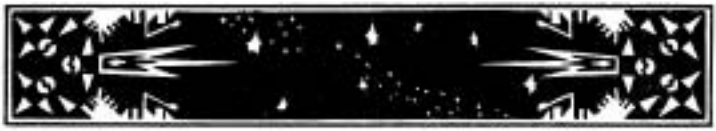

Chapter XXIX

MY MORNING AND EVENING STAR

IN ORDER to accelerate he work of the Earth's renovation, the Armies of the Stars had delayed their departure, and had taken part in the various activities with a most marvellous spirit. Thus, undertakings which would ordinarily have consumed years, were disposed of within a period of days.

There was not sufficient space on the surface of our globe to accommodate the soldiers of the planets, so they lived in their own airships, and coming down daily to assist in the reconstruction work, they had found time to look with more or less interest upon the daughters of the Earth.

Several members of the First Word of Unity, such as Bazi-del, Jahan-nama, Tasveer-kash, Pasand-bana, Rouh-afza and Elm-parvaz fell victim to the all-powerful God of Love, and decided to remain indefinitely at Tazah-shahr. This was an unexpected development, but on the face of it, one of inestimable promise, for if the super-giant intellects of the Stars take the daughters of the Earth to wife, a powerful and dynamic race will come into being, whose starry blood will flow in the veins of all the future generations.

When a ball begins to roll, no one can tell how far it will go! And now many glorious women who had enlisted in the Army of Light to free Kesh-makesh from the tyranny of

its oppressors, have in turn enslaved its sons with their disturbing beauty, and many daring and romantic girls of the Earth, thirsting for adventure and for new worlds to conquer, have promised themselves in marriage to the officers of the Expeditionary Forces and intend to return with them to their far-flung homes in the Universal Sky.

These marriages will unquestionably bring into play new powers for the welfare of all the humanities of the globes, and will knit them together as actual members of one family.

Now come my Vagabonds, telling me that they have no wish to return to their Wandering Stars. They have become used to this humdrum sort of existence and would feel unsettled on run-away comets. And then, where in the stars could they find such a happy-go-lucky master? Yes, they wished to cast in their lot with mortals!

I knew them well! These were excuses. The real reason was Love. Yes, the wandering gypsies had become enamoured of the daughters of men! Often of late, I had seen them strolling along the shaded boulevards with the bright-eyed girls of Tazeh-shahr, and had overheard them conversing in the language of matrimony, which is quite different from any other language.

So, to their delight, I told them that they had done the very best thing in the world, and that I would do all in my power to bring about the realization of their love-lit dreams.

* * *

And now comes the beginning of a new life—my life with Del Aram.

The horizons of the sky were illumined far and wide by the heavenly flotillas, and showers of roses, lilies, cherry-blossoms and forget-me-nots were pouring down upon the

heads of the people who were crowding the hills and valleys.

The generals of the starry armies, dressed in a most gorgeous fashion, were standing, rank on rank, near the summit of the Hill of Wisdom, where the bejewelled tent of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher had been pitched, dominating the country for miles around. The interior of the tent had been turned into a garden, and our Beloved Master dressed in spotless white, stood by the simple altar.

Then, to the love-music of the Stars, Del Aram—the pearl of pearls, the Darling of the Heavens—entered, in a shimmering robe, white star-like blossoms wreathing her head.

Silently we approached the altar, and with clinging arms and throbbing hearts, stood before the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher, and as we kissed His blessed hands, we became aware that we were surrounded by the visible and invisible spirits of the Universe. Then, to our wondering eyes, the altar blazed and became a sea of light, and out of that sea of light, the voice of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher was heard, clear and vibrant:

"O God of the Heavens and of the Earth! These two, Thy children, desire to enter the Garden of Union and become each other's intimate associates. I beg Thee, O Lord of Love, to make this marriage a source of happiness to themselves and to others. Harmonize them completely on the physical and spiritual planes and make them one on the outer and inner existences, so that they may spend their days in the utmost joy and fragrance, engaged in the glorification of Thine attributes.

"O Almighty! Thou hast brought them together from Thy two Mansions of Eternity, and hast created between them mutual affection, so that on this glorious night, in

the presence of Thine elect and chosen ones, they may become the embodiment of one soul and the stars of one heaven.

"I beg Thee, O God, for Thy Confirmation in their behalf! Unveil before their eyes the face of an Ideal Union, and create between them such an affinity and love that they may become an inspiring example to all mankind and that their home may be an asylum of joy and peace to all lovers.

"O Lord! They are married for the love of Thy Beauty, longing for the fulfillment of Thy good-pleasure and yearning to devote their lives to Thy service and to the service of Thy children! I supplicate Thee to prepare them for the reception of the Child of Love, so that they may welcome and guard him with glad hearts and plough the field of his mind and soul for the sowing of the seeds of Thy wisdom. O God, confirm them in the defence of the God of Love!

"Lord! Suffer their bodies to become one body and their spirits the expression of one spirit. Assist them with the cohorts of Thine approximate Angels, so that they may arise to obey Thy Will, in detachment from ought else but Thee, and freed from everything save Thy Love.

"O Lord! Help them with Thy favors, and surround them with the shining Army of Thy Kingdom of Light. Verily, Thou art the Confirmer, the Powerful, the Mighty, the Omnipotent!"

* * *

I led Del Aram from the tent and past the assembled guests. Hand in hand, we mounted the hill, until we stood together on the very summit.

Del Aram, my chosen bride, the sublime spirit of eternity, the pure being of Love, the white flower of tenderness, the

immortal Goddess of Beauty, the inspirer of my song, the Sweetheart of my existence! Del Aram, my wife, my treasure, my joy, here, to live with me on a shining Star —the Earth—*my home—our home!*

Presently, with her fingers she pointed to the dawn-sky, and there I beheld on the Eastern horizon *her home*—the most brilliant of all the Stars, my friendly beacon in hours of loneliness—Venus, our gorgeous planet of Love, our morning and evening Star!

And with this watch-tower of light before our eyes, and with the vision splendid in our souls, our lips met in the glad realization of a New Union—a Union between two spirits from two shining Stars—two shining Stars hanging like globes of fire in the blue Firmament of God.

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PROLOGUE

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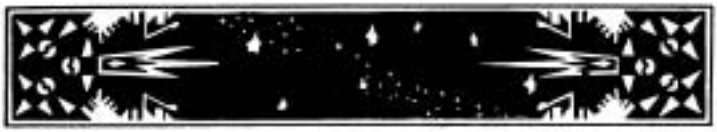

Chapter XXX

PROLOGUE

I AWOKE!

The Valley of Baharistan was bathed in the rays of the sun of a New Day.

Snatches of the Old Song of the Caravan, written by Hafiz, the lyric poet of my country and sung by Tamasha, the Persian minstrel and camel-driver, were still floating through my mind, and the incidents of the tale of an old humanity haunted my memory.

I looked around. Tamasha was fast asleep.

"Bestir yourself!" I called to him aloud.

He opened his eyes.

"What for?"

"Hark! Loud and clear I hear the drum of parting call. The cameliers have arisen and are making ready the camel-train."

"Will this eternal pilgrimage never come to an end?"

"There is no end. The end of one journey is the beginning of another."

"I am tired of it all."

"Come, Tamasha, my old true friend. Rise! Be quick! We must yet visit many countries—"

"And talk to countless unheeding, unlistening people!"

"And live in strange, far away cities."

"And be scoffed at and persecuted by everybody!"

"That will indeed be a great blessing!"

"O Vagabond! Do we never reach the goal? What is this restlessness of yours?"

"Beloved Tamasha, we must travel far to reach the goal. Up! We are now bent on a Great Adventure!"

"I know your Great Adventure! You have been telling me of it all these years, while wandering aimlessly from country to country to worship before the shrines of unknown gods."

"And to associate and converse with their followers."

"And go on and on and on, and never come to an end."

"But I told you just now that there is no end, yet I feel somehow that we *have* come to an END, which is—"

"Which is what?" Tamasha asked eagerly.

"THE BEGINNING."

"The beginning?"

"Yes, THE BEGINNING."

"The beginning of what?"

"Of Teaching and Writing."

"Teaching what?"

"The Ideals of a New Humanity."

"And writing what?"

"THE NEW SONG OF THE CARAVAN."

The Message of the Spirit of the Worlds' Teacher entitled "The Sermon of Wisdom," embodied in Chapter XXVIII, Pages 388-394, concluding with the Golden Rule of the New Day, is, with the exception of a few connecting words, from the Writings of Baha-U-Llah and Abdul Baha.

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